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**Who did what
to whom.**

BY VICTOR NAVASKY

**THE NIXON DOCTRINE
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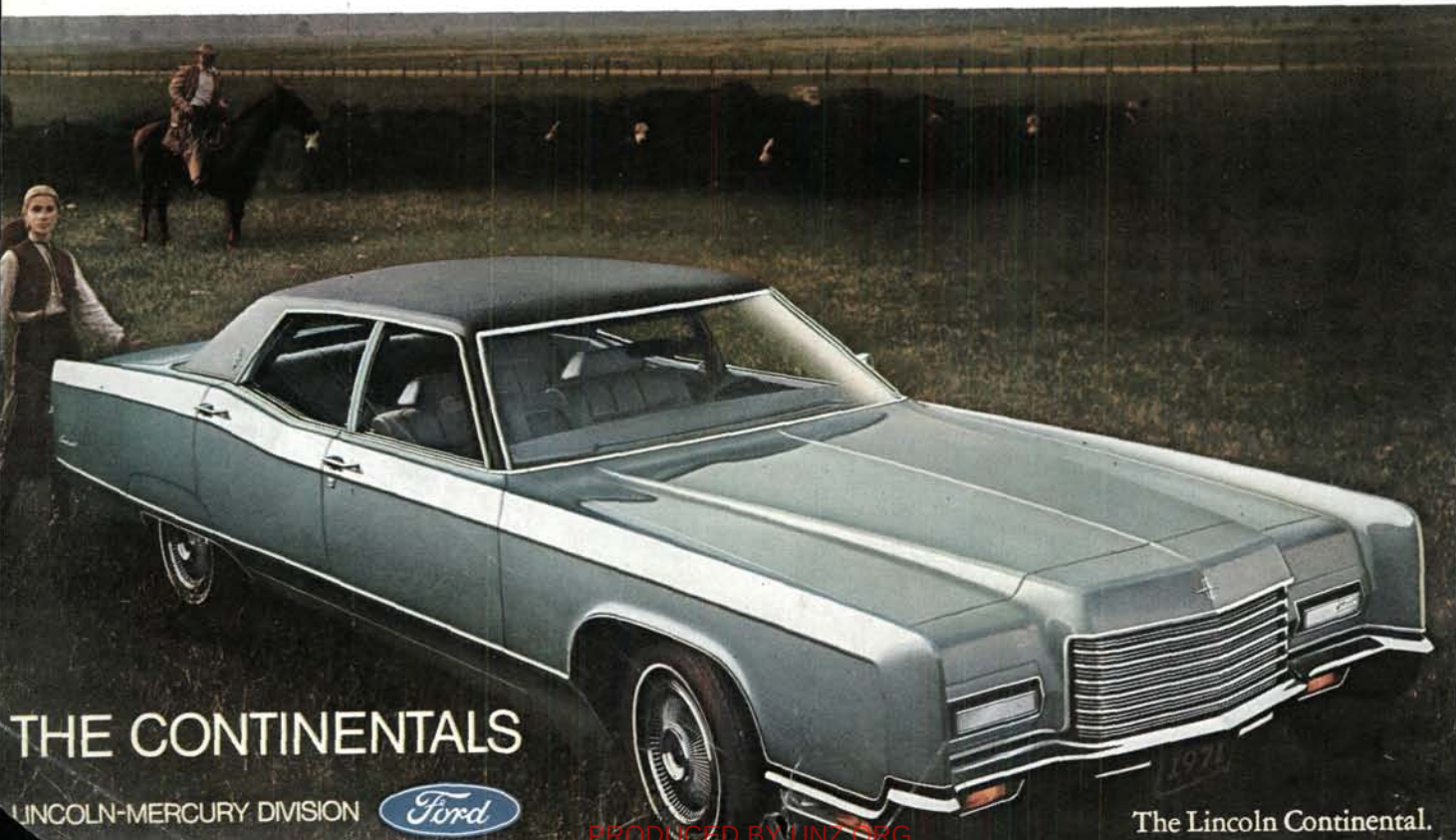
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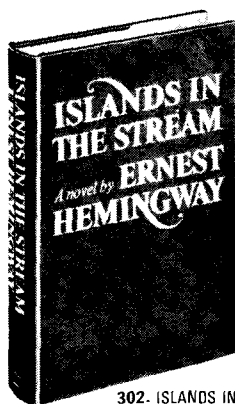
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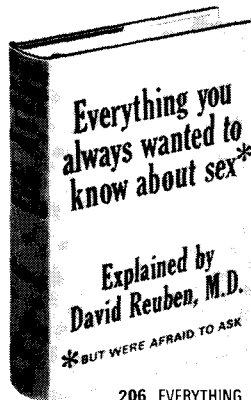
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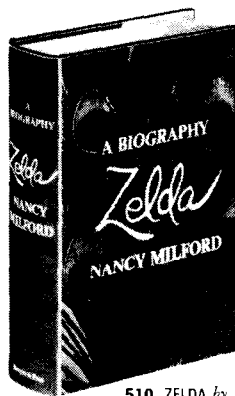
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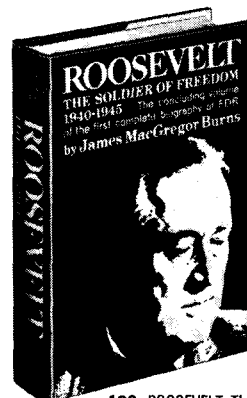
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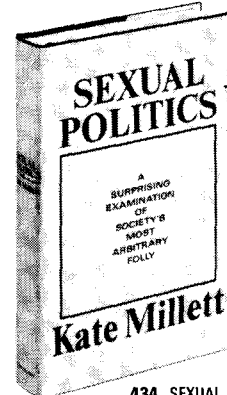
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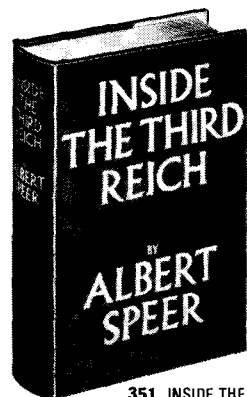
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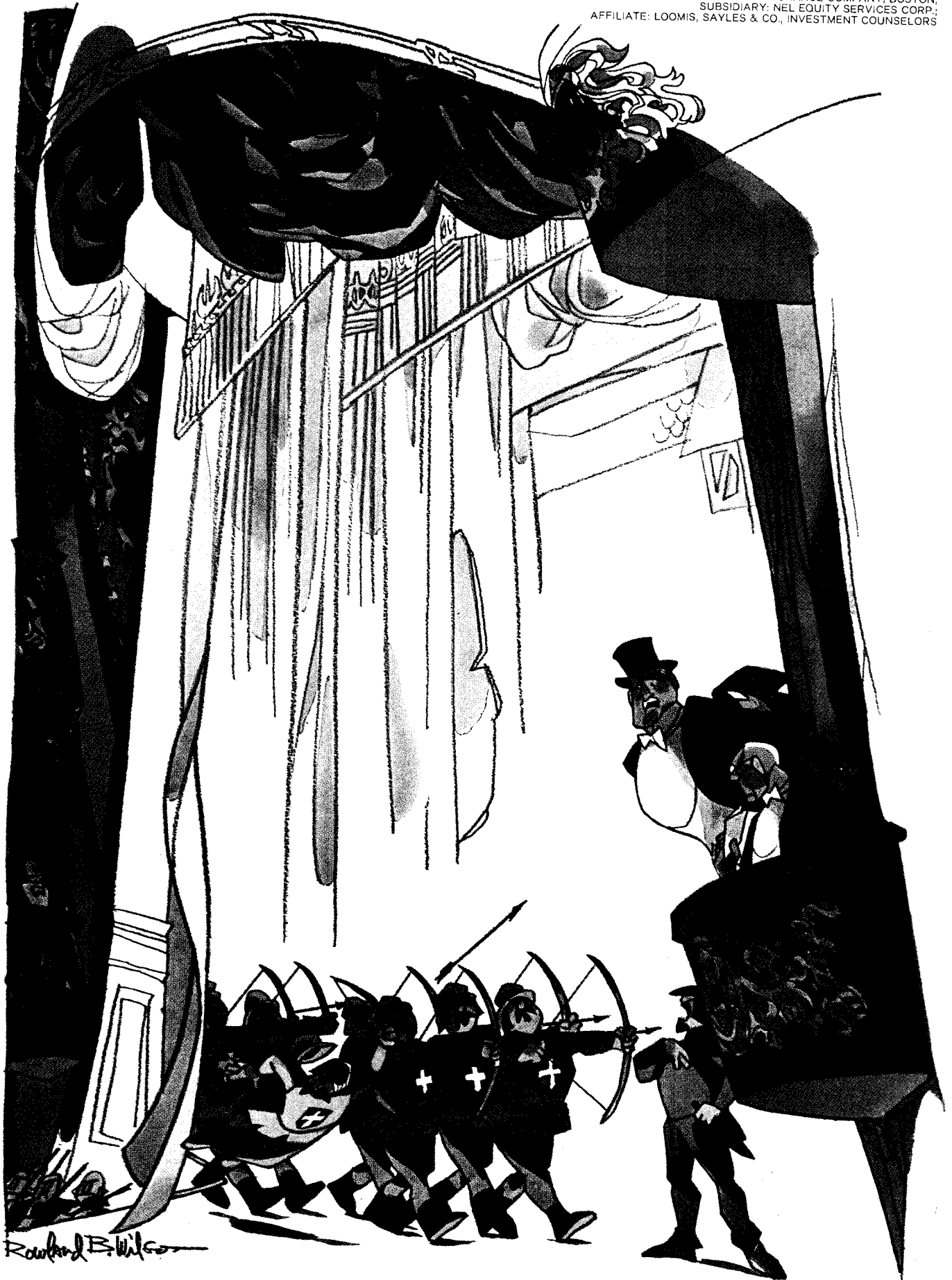
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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

None but the most misanthropic journalist can fail to sympathize with the public's growing plaint about the diet of bad news spooned out every hour, day, week, month by the media. So much of it is so unrelentingly gloomy that many editors have begun a self-conscious search for some doses of good news to pass on to the customers.

A new program packaged by an outfit that calls itself Happy Day Radio is already being aired by nearly fifty stations. Some newspapers have introduced columns devoted only to items that bring a smile to the lips or a hint of sentimental glycerine to the eye. A New England confectioner has gotten into the act with a new item called Good News candy. And note how the TV newscasts now intrude, between the latest Vietnam casualty figures and the most recent Panther shoot-out or Asian cholera outbreak, some such Chuckle of the Day as the story of the performance of *Rigoletto* that was interrupted in Knoxville, Tennessee, when the lead tenor inhaled a chicken feather.

It's a noble calling, to seek out good news, but in these times it is somewhat more difficult than rolling a boulder up Annapurna. When something goes well, it seldom makes news—that is one of journalism's truisms. The truism has long been strongly supported by the public's reading and listening habits (*Reader's Digest* and Art Linkletter aside). Marshall McLuhan, who does not *always* adhere to his dictum that clear prose indicates the absence of thought, maintains that "bad news reveals the character of change. Good news does not." We live in a convulsively changing world. Ergo, once the convulsion diminishes we can enjoy again the space-age equivalents of flagpole sitters, stories of scientific breakthroughs that enhance man's ability to survive rather than his talent for decimation, and, who knows? even a disarmament conference that produces disarmament.

Fortunately, there are still events and situations that fall between the gloomy and the comforting,

matters that can be dealt with under the serviceable rubric: What really happened? or Where do things stand? This month's lead article (page 43) is one such story, with its meticulous disclosure of what really happened in the much discussed case of the U. S. government's "electronic surveillance" of the late Martin Luther King. Another is Associate Editor Richard Todd's deceptively gentle examination of the underground press in the Life and Letters section. And, of course, the concluding installment of Ward Just's profile of the U. S. Army and its leaders' thoughts about the Army of the future. The October *Atlantic*, with the first installment of *Soldiers* and the Larry Rivers cover, shows all the signs of becoming a collector's item, and it has persuaded West Point to take out more than 300 subscriptions to the *Atlantic* for the cadets. The Air Force Academy was moved to order 50 subscriptions. Annapolis apparently is waiting for us to turn our sights on the Navy.

* * *

Coming in the Atlantic:

Ralph Ellison: An Undivided American by Ralph Ellison and James Alan McPherson, a singular word-portrait of the man and writer.

Treasures from the Phillips Collection, a holiday bouquet in color of great paintings from the gem of art galleries, the Phillips in Washington.

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Robert Manning

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REPORTS

THE NIXON DOCTRINE

From Singapore to Tokyo, America's shifting Asian policy is the key to every statesman's plans. No one doubts that change has begun. In that sense, the Nixon Doctrine is no longer just words; it is the emerging shape of reality. But on a long tour of Asia, I found no responsible figure, official or unofficial, who claimed with any confidence that he divined the essential meaning of America's new policy. In that sense, the Nixon Doctrine is a hazy shadow, unsettling, uncertain; it is welcome to some, unnerving to others, unclear to all. So long as that is so, it is a shaky base for efforts to build a new stability in a region of tremorous conflict.

Get us out

Some outlines, or rather directions of momentum, have been recognized by everyone involved. First, there is the undoubted American desire to get American men out of direct combat and exposure to enemy fire, not only in Vietnam. Even at MACV, U. S. military headquarters in Vietnam, the chief briefing officer now says heartily, "The name of the game is to get us out of here." It is noticeable, though, that instead of dwelling on advances and the imminence of great success, as they used to, briefing officers now tend to emphasize military difficulties and dangers. They are real, of course. But observers who know MACV well can't help suspecting that at least part of this new ploy is to discourage the kind of optimism which might lead credulous congressmen to say, "That's great, but if we're doing so well, why can't we get out faster?" Generals are careful these

days not to show too much light filtering into the tunnel.

Second, the understanding has spread that Americans want not only to get out of the front line of Asian wars; we want to be altogether more reticent. Unlike well-bred children, we would like to be heard but not seen.

Third, it is taken at last as self-evident that there are limits on the men, money, and attention which the United States is willing to provide Asia, and that those limits lie somewhere below the current levels.

And finally, the thought is percolating into the consciousness of all who make decisions that the United States no longer automatically considers every Asian dispute a matter of its vital national interest. But of course, each capital considers its own troubles to be of the special sort which Washington cannot afford to watch indifferently. Vietnamese who oppose the Thieu government whisper bitterly that it is America's fault that Saigon does not govern better. They cannot yet come to grips with the idea that the United States may soon consider the governance of South Vietnam, for better or for worse, to be of no direct concern.

These are the vague, but accepted, main points of the Nixon Doctrine. But what are the new limits of American involvement to be, and how fast must they be reached? What is the new American understanding of how much is committed by a commitment? How far out of Asia does the United States mean to pull? How much does the United States care what happens in Asia in the 70s, and what will it leave as tangible proof, as it has maintained NATO in Europe?

Does the phrase "Asians helping Asians," or, as critics put it, "Asians fighting Asians," mean that the United States will provide everything

but the front-line manpower, or that it will step back and help hold the ring, or that it will become a mere spectator?

These are the Asian questions. Nobody pretends to be sure of answers, and it isn't only because there is much static in the voice of America. Certainly, President Nixon adds to the confusion when, after announcing his new doctrine in Guam, he flies to Bangkok and immediately proclaims no change of any kind in our commitment to Thailand; when Nixon orders troops into Cambodia, orders them out again as the war gets going in earnest, announces that survival of Lon Nol's regime is not Washington's affair, and urgently hustles every friendly Asian government to rush to Lon Nol's aid; when Secretary of State Rogers says on tour that the United States is going to keep its troops in Asia, while Secretary of Defense Laird is saying that withdrawal will start this year in Korea whether Seoul likes it or not.

Vice President Agnew's whirlwind trip momentarily soothed some ruffled feathers, a new role for Spiro the Blunt, but he left a trail of contradictions. He told Koreans the withdrawal of 20,000 Americans was only "the first step" to removal of them all, which the White House promptly disclaimed. Then he went on to promise extensive financial help to upgrade Korean forces, when both the Defense Department and the Congress were talking only of sharp cuts in the military budget. It must have been strange for the Koreans, who aren't ignorant of the U. S. system, to hear the presiding officer of the Senate tell them not to pay attention to the amendment forbidding the United States to pay bigger allowances to Koreans and Thais in Vietnam than to American troops because the Senate's vote "doesn't count."

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THE NIXON DOCTRINE

Cambodia heard him say the United States "will do everything we can to help the Lon Nol government," and then overheard him explain to Americans that he meant only that a Communist victory there might slow troop withdrawals from Vietnam. He told Thailand to forget the arguments among Americans because the United States is going to keep up its big military subsidies. Seldom has the oriental conviction that nothing a public figure says should be taken at face value been so strikingly confirmed.

Still, every government indulges in inconsistency, and one so huge as the United States dealing with such a tangle as Asia can be expected to zig and zag on its course. The deeper difficulty is that the premises, or, to sustain the metaphor, the compass readings on which the course is based, do not reconcile with the landmarks on the horizon.

Lull and run?

Assuming that the aim of the Nixon Doctrine is to promote stability in non-Communist Asia by getting Asians to do more for themselves mutually and lean on America less, it parallels American policy in Europe from the Marshall Plan onward. In his sweeping article on "Asia After Vietnam" in *Foreign Affairs* of October, 1967, Nixon called for "a concert of Asian strengths as a counterforce to China" similar to the "Atlantic community within which a ravaged Europe was rebuilt and the westward advance of the Soviets contained." There were inconsistencies in Europe, too, but the thread of policy was clear—to encourage Western Europeans to develop their own strength so as to form with the United States a joint barrier to Communist expansion, and eventually a sufficiently solid base from which to negotiate peaceful terms with Moscow. (West Germany's new treaty with the Soviet Union is the logical fruit of Dean Acheson's reliance on "containment" and "negotiation from strength" a generation ago.)

Some people doubt that a parallel to America's long-range commitment to Europe is the correct assumption about evolving U. S. policy in Asia. In several Asian capitals, top officials wondered aloud whether Nixon were

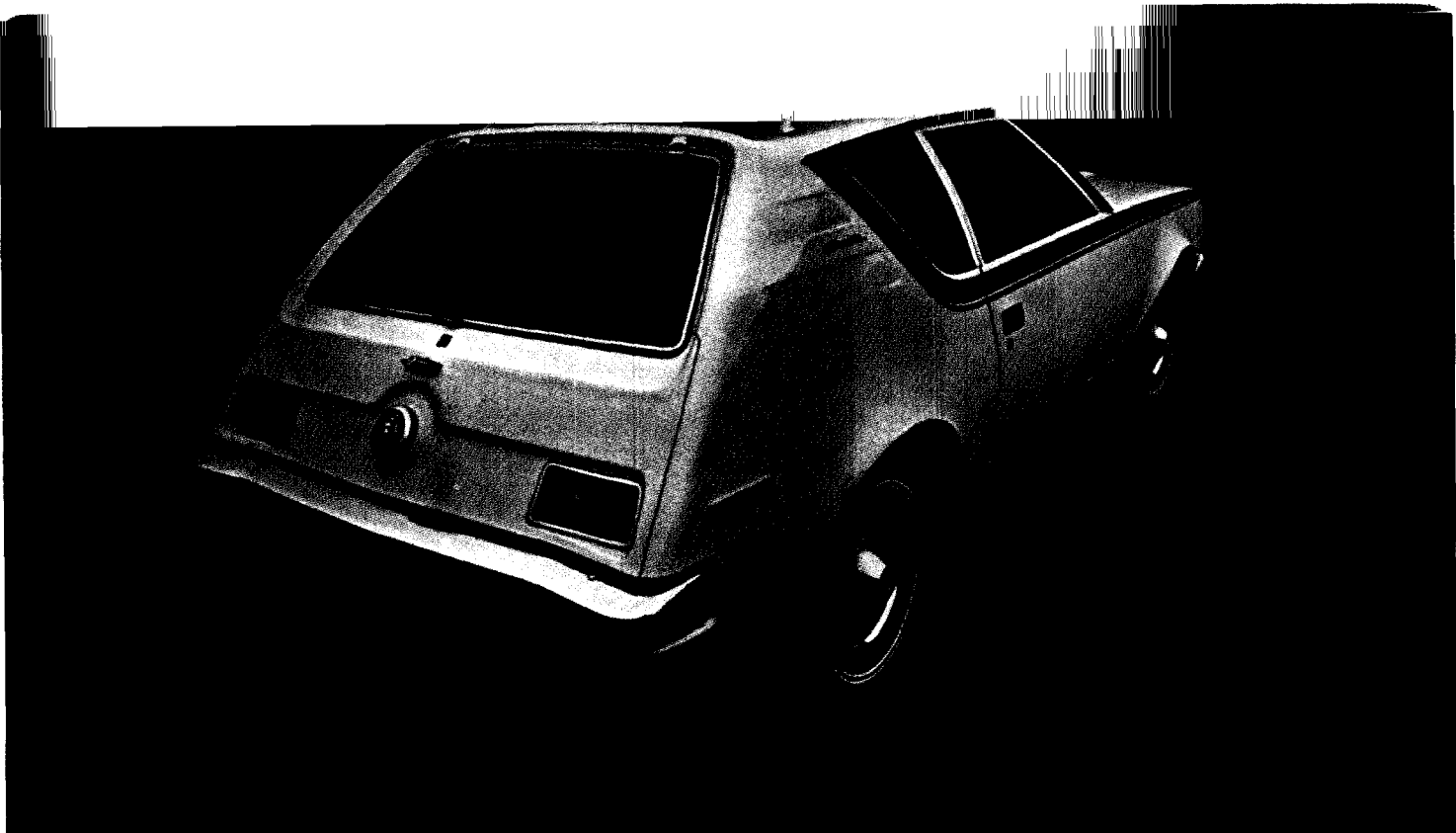
not secretly copying De Gaulle's strategy on Algeria, lulling the hawks with promises of honor only to cut and run when the moment appeared ripe. It isn't inconceivable, and Nixon does fancy De Gaulle's style, but it seems quite out of character, politically as well as personally, since it would force the President to rely on the support of the left against the predictable outrage of the right.

If the policy is what the Administration says it is, then its chance of working depends on the ability of Asian states to achieve that mutual reinforcement within the time period set by dwindling U. S. patience. The deadline can't be fixed; it depends in turn on whether Asian countries are seen to be making enough progress to renew U. S. patience, as well as on the trials of America's domestic life. Yet there can't be much doubt that a historic deadline does exist not many years away. A vice-minister in one worried government figured there were three to four years to go. Others hope for a little more or fear a little less, according to whether "we show we're able to use the time," as a leader in Singapore put it.

But every Asian I talked to, from consistent critics of the United States to consistent apple-polishers (but excluding avowed Communist supporters), was convinced that disaster is bound to follow if a deadline is fixed and the United States suddenly decamps from the Far East.

"We don't want you to be so frustrated that you want to withdraw abruptly and forget about Asia," said a Japanese of high rank. "There should be a return to normal, and normal means a substantial U. S. presence in Asia. In our opinion, your presence is beneficent to almost everyone in the area. It is in our interest to encourage it." A former Southeast Asian leader, one who never approved America's plunge into Asia's politics and battles, said tartly, "You are too unpredictable. First you try to line everybody up behind you, and then you want to pull out and leave us to face the consequences on our own. Everyone will be angry at you now. What do you expect?"

These attitudes by no means denote affection for the United States, nor even a sense of common destiny with America such as permeated European thought in the 50s (to the discomfort of a number of Euro-



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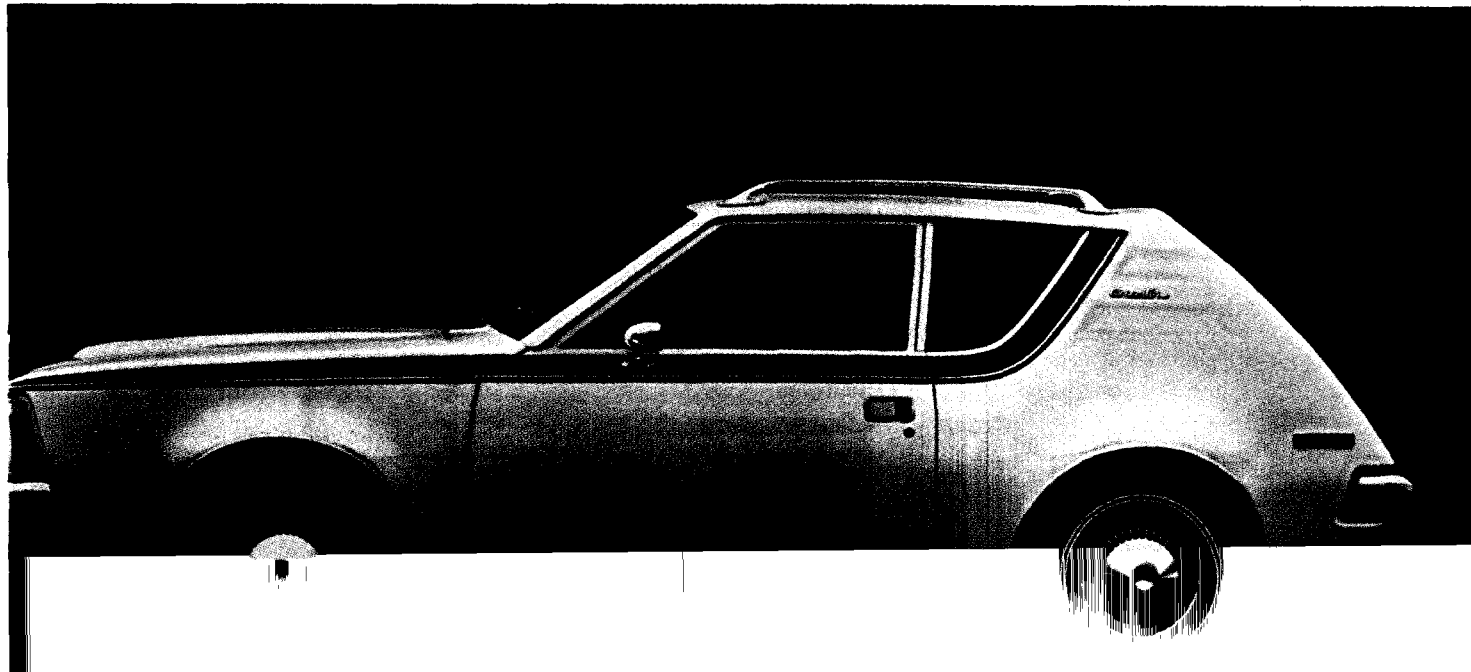
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THE NIXON DOCTRINE

peans). They come from a sense of weakness, of fragility of institutions and even nations in a region facing vast transition. The lines of conflict criss-cross the area. Instability is inherent at this stage, not only within societies but among countries.

The policy of collective security and mutual aid worked in Europe because the Europeans were ready to work together. It was a thousand years—from Charlemagne to Jean Monnet—before people in Western Europe came to the conclusion that their common interests were greater than their hostilities. Even after World War II, it took fear of the Soviet Union to consolidate the European coalition and push it on until it gained its own momentum.

Nothing like that has happened in Asia. Before World War II, there were but three independent countries—China, Japan, and Thailand. Decolonization was completed scarcely a decade ago. Nothing in the colonial period prepared countries to cooperate with their neighbors. The ties were all to the imperial metropolis. As they emerge now as nation-states, and impoverished, struggling ones at that, there is little to give Asians a feeling of regional community as a buttress against their separate fears.

Troubles to share

"Asking Asians to help Asians is like asking a bunch of paupers to form a corporation," sniffed one. "We have nothing to share but our troubles." (With few exceptions, no leading officials wanted to be named as critics or doubters of the Nixon Doctrine. Presumably they don't yet know enough of Nixon's intentions to risk saying publicly where they stand.)

"Nothing to share" is an exaggeration. There are a number of regional groups, and they are performing some useful functions in financing development, promoting trade, even a cautious amount of political coordinating. SEATO, the only military alliance, is a facade, however, a diaphanous cover for direct links to the United States. Even Australia makes no pretense that its involvement in SEATO, and especially its participation in the Vietnam War, was done for any reason but to assure America's continued commitment to Australia.

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THE NIXON DOCTRINE

It isn't an exaggeration, though, to see in the remark a measure of the confidence Asian states have in each other. Quite apart from ideology, almost all of them have old, unresolved quarrels with their neighbors. They don't trust and don't much like each other. If they must ask somebody to come and help, they would far prefer us round-eyes to their neighbors however much they may dislike Westerners. Cambodia, judging from the past, expected large-scale U. S. military help when it went to war. Now, in their desperation, Cambodians are welcoming military help from South Vietnam and seeking it from Thailand, but their distaste is staggering.

Economic backwardness is another crucial difference impeding Asian cooperation. The mercantilists, and in their turn the Marxists, were wrong about the real magnetic lines of trade. They are strongest among industrialized countries, not between the haves and the have-nots, and certainly not among the have-nots who have little use for each other's raw materials.

The most important economic advance in Asia, outside of Japan, is turning out to depress rather than encourage regional trade. That is the "green revolution," the spectacular increase in agricultural yields due to new techniques. As a result, even food is losing its assured market. Traditional rice exporters such as Thailand are having a hard time selling because the usual buyers are growing more at home. Faced with a bad trade deficit, the Thais have imposed stiff new taxes to discourage imports. There is already resentment among suppliers to Thailand, and retaliation is certain to follow.

Thus, while "Asians helping Asians" sets off pleasing political vibrations, especially to U. S. taxpayers, there is really no political or economic base for it on a significant scale. It may well come some day, but probably decades, maybe generations, will pass before there can be any realistic expectation of an Asian bloc with sufficient cohesion and collective strength to deal on anything like even terms with the Chinese giant. For a long time ahead, the countries will remain a collection of midgets unable, and basically unwilling, to pool what strength they have.

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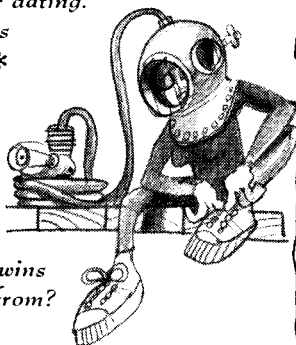
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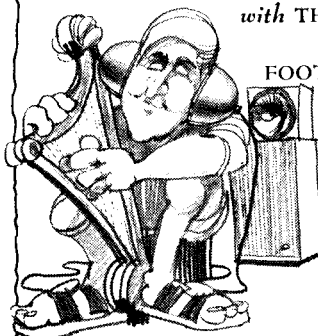
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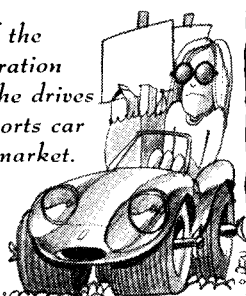


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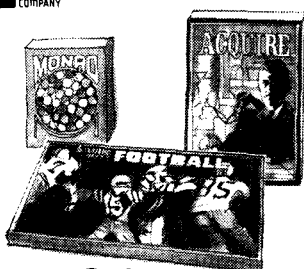
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THE NIXON DOCTRINE

China—vast, overwhelming, hugely present throughout the region even at the peak of its self-imposed quarantine—is the one factor pressing other Asians to awareness that they have some common interests. But it has operated in a quite different way from Soviet pressure on Europe.

Do-it-yourself

Partly, that must be credited to Mao's shrewdness. He has understood the force of nationalism as Stalin and his successors never did. Instead of trying to suppress nationalism in Asia to make room for Peking's hegemony, Moscow-style, Peking is prepared to encourage it as an ally of revolution. Partly, also, the Mao doctrine of do-it-yourself revolution with maximum encouragement but minimum material succor from Peking is a reflection of China's weakness. As the Japanese point out, mainland China, with eight times as many people, has less than half (\$69 billion) the gross national product of Japan (\$160 billion). Japanese projections, based on careful study and the best information about China available anywhere, are that this ratio will fall to less than a third by 1975 (China—\$100 billion; Japan—\$350 to \$400 billion) vastly increasing the disproportion in growth as well as total capacity.

There is a wide range of assessments of the "China threat" among the various countries of the region. Only the Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan expresses its fears in terms of massive invasion. The others view the danger on a scale which reaches from Japan's comfortable assumption that physical security is the least of the problems China poses, through Thailand's fear of insurgency nourished by Peking, to South Korea's fear of direct attack by North Korea with China backing up Pyongyang.

American military men throughout Asia persist in concentrating on China as a military threat. Almost nobody else, including the more astute American diplomats, perceives the situation in those terms. China does have the ability to exert great pressure. But it exerts primarily political and social pressure on the shaky underpinnings of flimsy regimes grop-

ing slowly and, for the most part, with woeful ineffectiveness and error, to modernize their societies. China certainly affects every country in its neighborhood, but it simply is not the catalyst for a coalition of resistance that the Soviet Union became in Europe.

Not surprisingly, the only capital where one hears even mildly serious talk of organizing collective defense against China is Taipei. The Chinese Nationalists are, after all, Chinese and continue to think in grand, continental terms. They complain that until the Nixon Doctrine, Washington actively discouraged real efforts at Asian military cooperation in favor of bilateral ties which it could more easily control. Now, though admittedly wistfully, the Chinese Nationalists talk about a South Korea-Taiwan-South Vietnam-Thailand grouping which they point out would add up to an impressive armed force of two million men. It isn't even likely enough to be worth listing the obstacles and difficulties to overcome before such a coalition, if not a formal alliance, could get started.

Japan's soft step

Outside of Japan, then, there is neither the way nor the will for Asians to take over execution of American policy in Asia by helping each other and relieving the United States. Basically, the Administration knows this, and it counts heavily on prodding Japan to take up the task of acting as coalition nucleus. There is something in it, but less than enthusiasts in Washington have advertised.

First, Japan is far from convinced that American policy is based on a sound judgment of what really threatens stability in Asia. Secondly, Japan is rearming and emerging from its post-war period of looking totally inward, though not so fast as the United States seeks. It is moving with great caution toward decisions on just what the responsibilities of an Asian power should be and how Japan should exercise them. It is prepared to expand its foreign aid and development effort. It is beginning to accept some political tasks, but its statesmen think in terms of mediation, not regional leadership. Significantly, even Japan's willingness to mediate is directed to quarrels such as that between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah, or perhaps between India

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THE NIXON DOCTRINE

and Pakistan over Kashmir, or the possibility of a dispute between Singapore and Indonesia, providing the parties ask Japan to get involved. Note that these are classic territorial disputes, in no case involving ideology and big power conflict.

Japan is not prepared to offer military support abroad, even through the sale of weapons, let alone dispatch of men, forbidden by its constitution. Top U. S. officials dream of inveigling the Japanese into an important role in any international peace-keeping force sent to Indochina to guarantee a future settlement. Maybe, maybe not. There are too many unanswerable questions of circumstance. At any rate, with the Nixon Doctrine the United States is trying to push Japan into exercising big power influence faster and further than Japan wants to go, or than the other Asian countries can comfortably countenance. This isn't likely to work, and if it does, it is almost certainly unwise.

Japan, of course, must now be included in the list of Asian powers. There are four—the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan. Their roles and relations are shifting, but any consideration of power balance in the area now requires that one take account of all four. The Soviet Union particularly has been expanding its presence, and its claim to vested interest, with relentless energy. Looking westward from the Far East, it is easy to understand how urgently Moscow wants the Suez Canal reopened and to find reasons for Soviet Middle East policy which are far less apparent when one looks eastward from Washington.

It is not so easy to calculate the major Soviet goal in the Far East. Is it essentially a defensive effort to cordon China, or a drive for hegemony? Japanese Foreign Minister Aichi, a canny man, told me candidly that he simply had no answer to the question of probable Soviet intentions because they aren't yet at all clear.

Each of these four powers, in any case, has its own national interest in Asia. Some conflict directly, some are parallel, none fully coincide. Together, the four constitute the framework within which Asia will develop during the next generation, and it is that framework which will deter-

mine whether there is a chance for orderly and peaceful transition or a near certainty of violent upheaval. That is what Japanese officials mean when they speak of the need for "normal American presence" in the area. Sudden removal of the United States from the equation would destroy all hope of balance.

Contradiction

If this analysis is correct, the outcome is contradiction. The Nixon Doctrine requires a very substantial dispatch of American men and money to Asia for a long period ahead, because the Asians simply can't make it work in a short time. The Nixon Doctrine also requires very substantial reduction of U. S. men and money being sent to Asia in a short time, because Americans will not (and should not) keep up such a heavy flow much longer.

The contradiction threatens failure of the policy, a very grave danger for both Asia and the United States. Not the least of the risks of failure is a revulsion in America so intense that it will produce the kind of isolationism which excluded the United States from Europe between 1918 and 1939. Only after a second world war began did this country recognize how much it was menaced by the disorders of Europe.

My conclusion is that our policy will have to change, or evolve quite differently from what seems the present direction. Instead of trying to get non-Communist Asians together to replace American counterpressure to China, which we can't do, U. S. policy should be to encourage each country to seek its own gradual accommodation with Peking.

That is not possible so long as the Indochina war continues. Nor is there the slightest prospect that the war can be ended so long as the United States is involved for the indefinite future. It is one more argument, added to the many others, for fixing a date for the complete withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam.

The other key obstacle is U. S. recognition of the Nationalists on Taiwan as the government of China. There is fortunately a solution for this problem which, rare in international politics, combines practicality, morality, and self-interest all at once. That is to help arrange, perhaps through international auspices, a refer-

endum on Taiwan. The result can be predicted with full confidence. The Taiwanese would vote overwhelmingly for independence from any government of China, real or pretending. Then the United States could recognize the sovereign state of Taiwan and work, as circumstance allows, to negotiate relations with China itself. This solution would not please Peking. But if Taiwan were also neutralized on lines of what the Japanese call "the Austrian solution," it would, together with withdrawal from Vietnam, demonstrate conclusively that the remaining U. S. presence in Asia is a balancing factor and in no way a threat to China. No one can foresee Peking's evolution. But it can be influenced as all countries, including the mightiest, are influenced by possibilities offered, ambitions accommodated or balked, and roads opened for maneuver, or shut off.

If the United States shifted from its policy of "counterforce to China" and removed what Peking can legitimately regard as an American threat along its borders, it could then give economic and political support to countries resisting Peking's efforts to foment upheaval without making their relations with China impossible. This policy also offers the eventual hope of inducing China to see its own best interests in accommodation with, instead of hegemony over, Asian countries following a different ideological path to modernity. An Asian Great Wall against China offers nothing but strife, and anyway it can't be built by shipping U. S. bricks to Asian contractors and telling them to get on with the job.

The real problems of Asia are not military but political, social, economic. Arms and alliances, as Vietnam has shown, cannot solve these problems. It is still possible for the Nixon Doctrine to be transformed into a policy of support for Asian countries which are trying to come to terms with China. These countries need an American policy which will safeguard their own efforts to develop, rather than a policy of countercoalition designed principally to reduce the cost of conflict for America.

It is possible, but it hasn't begun, and there isn't much time. That American deadline is not yet marked on the calendar, but it exists.

—FLORA LEWIS

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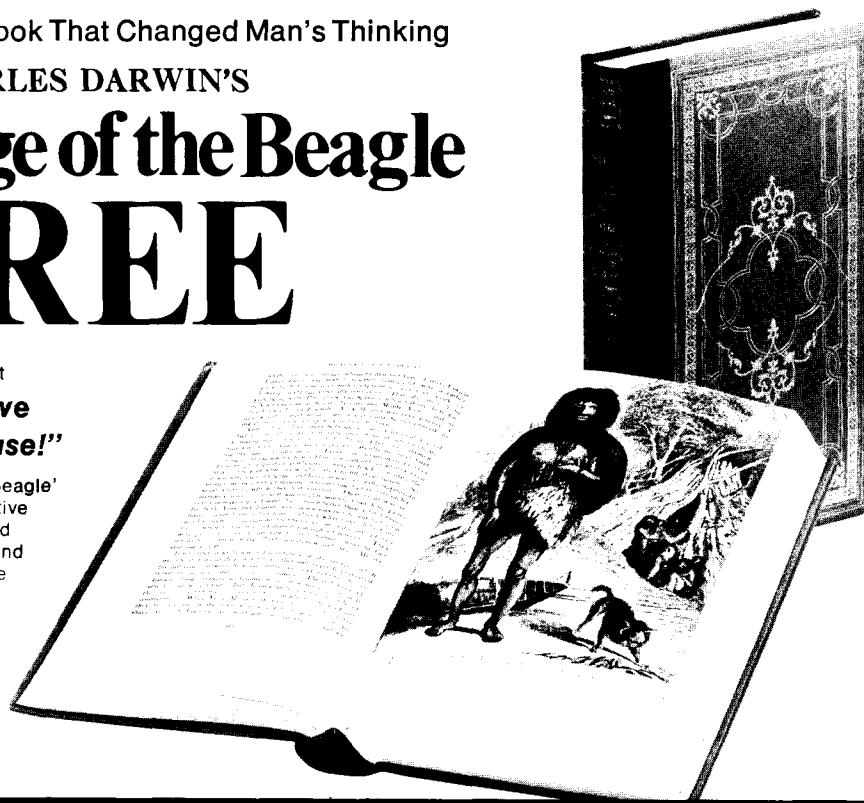
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The New York Times Book Review



WASHINGTON

In the first half of his presidency, Richard Nixon has complicated his life by trying desperately to deliver on campaign promises made in 1968 to two industries. Last year the President kept his pledge to protect the special tax privileges enjoyed by the oil and gas industry; the result was that the Democratic majority of Congress was able to run away with the issue of tax reform.

This year Mr. Nixon is holding to his promise to protect the Southern-based textile industry from foreign competition. And in doing so, he has cost the Administration control of the trade bill now before Congress. Although the President's pledge to the textile industry was very much like promises made to the same interests by every presidential candidate in recent years, it has taken on special importance because it is one of the many political IOU's held by Senator Strom Thurmond (Rep., South Carolina).

Mr. Nixon has clung to his commitment despite strong objections from his own Cabinet and economic and consumer advisers. The President was warned that if he pursued the strong protectionist line demanded by the Southerners he would open the way for an international campaign against American overseas investments and exports, especially farm products. In addition, Mr. Nixon was advised that tough limits against cheaply made foreign textiles and shoes would raise prices for those Americans least able to pay. Previous Administrations faced with the same choices took the free trade route and risked the anger and opposition of the textile lobby, but not the Nixon Administration. As a result, Congress has been encouraged to write a draft trade bill that would be the first backward step taken from the traditional American position in favor of liberal world commerce initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Cordell Hull thirty-six years ago.

Trading cotton

The specific concern behind the trade debate is the heavy influx of Japanese and other Far Eastern textiles and clothes made from synthetic, wool, and blended fibers. On Aug-

ust 21, 1968, Mr. Nixon sent a telegram to Thurmond and other Southern Republicans criticizing President Johnson for ignoring the rising flow of imports from the Far Eastern countries and promised, "as President, my policy will be to rectify this unfair development and assure prompt action to effectively administer the existing Long-Term International Cotton Textile Arrangements. . . . Also, I will promptly take steps necessary to extend the concept of international trade agreements to all other textile articles involving wool, man-made fibers, and blends."

The model Mr. Nixon proposed to follow was drawn by John Kennedy. To fulfill his promise to the textile spokesmen in Congress, Kennedy initiated an international negotiation which, in February, 1962, produced a voluntary agreement to regulate the flow of cotton textiles in world trade. That arrangement has been remarkably successful. It has now been signed by thirty nations and was routinely renewed this summer for three years. With the cotton deal in his pocket, Kennedy was able to get congressional approval for the 1962 Trade Act. One of Kennedy's most significant legislative achievements, that law gave the United States authority to participate in the last general international tariff-cutting negotiation, the "Kennedy Round."

Emulating the Kennedy Administration, Mr. Nixon dispatched Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans early last year in pursuit of a voluntary agreement to control imports of wool and synthetic textiles. Mr. Nixon, less than three weeks after taking office, described textile imports as "a special problem which has caused very great distress in certain parts of this country, and to a great number of wage earners, as well as those who operate our textile facilities." The tone of negotiation was set by the President when he said the Administration hoped to handle the issue "on a voluntary basis rather than having to go to a legislation which would impose quotas, and I think would turn the clock back in our objective of trying to achieve freer trade."

The Nixon stratagem, thus, was to say, "Sign a deal or we'll make a law," and Stans set off in April, 1969, to play out that strategy abroad. He was a logical choice for the assignment. A fiercely partisan Republican and the

most conservative member of the Cabinet, Stans was personally credited with raising \$33 million for the Nixon campaign from business sources. He knew the obligations Nixon had to various fat cat contributors. The trip was one way the President could assuage Stans's hurt feelings about not having been made Treasury Secretary or included in the inner circle of economic advisers.

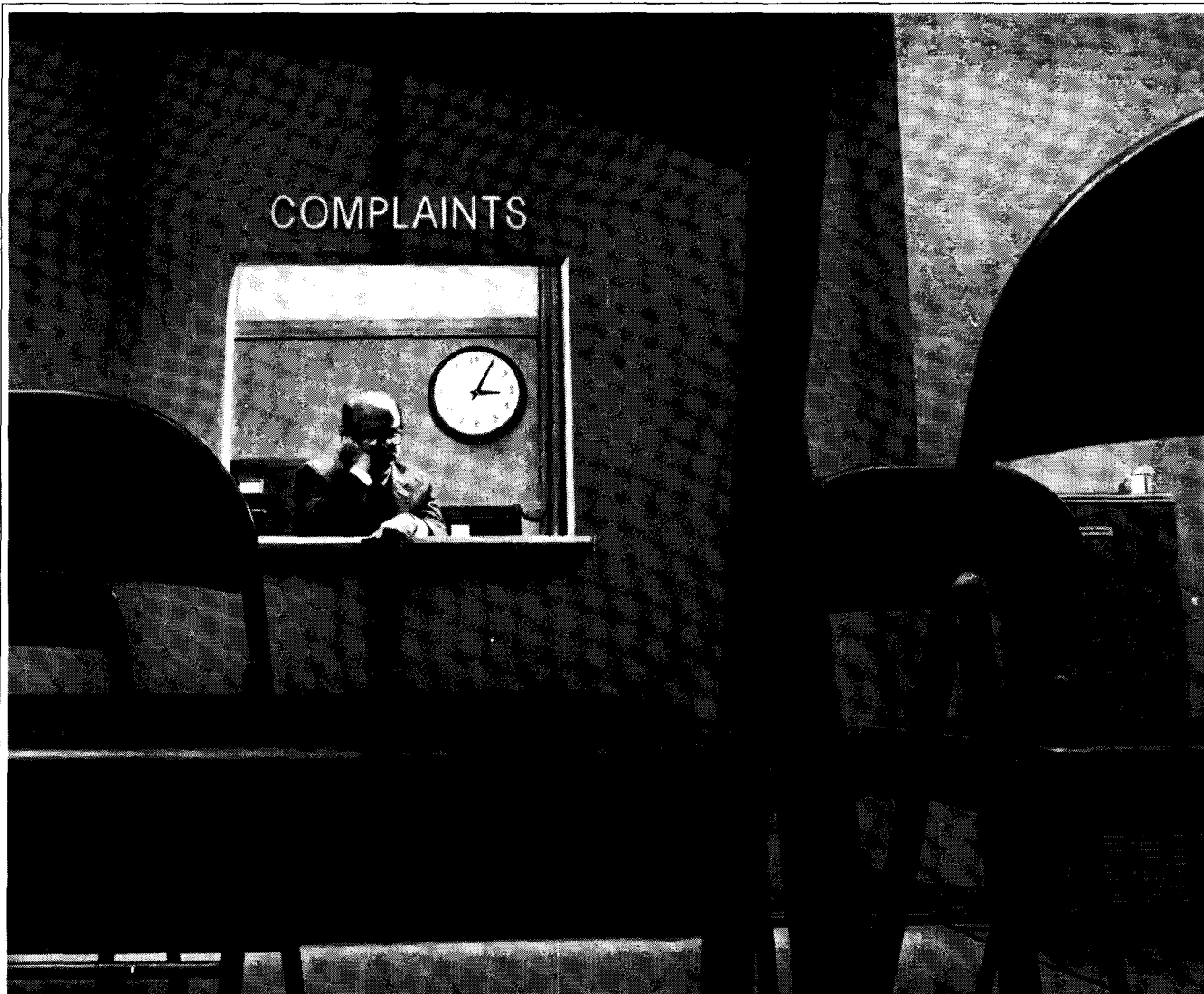
Though a free trader by tradition, Wilbur D. Mills, Democratic Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, had an Arkansan's concern about the textile industry. He came to the aid of the Administration by introducing, in May, 1969, a bill to set quotas on textile imports. Since he has opposed mandatory quotas in the past, Mills knew that foreigners would pay attention when he introduced a restrictive bill that would come before the House's most powerful committee, which he dominates. Mills wanted to keep the initiative on the legislation and also sensed there was strong protectionist sentiment developing within the committee.

"Just politics"

The Stans trip turned out to be a fiasco. The key nation in the negotiations was Japan, but Stans visited Europe first. By the time he got to Asia, Japan and the other textile-producing nations of the East were insulted that they had not been consulted first. They also knew the Europeans had not been sympathetic to the Administration's proposal.

For more than a year, the U. S. negotiators, led by Stans, tugged and pulled with their counterparts in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Regular optimistic bulletins were issued, but there was no progress. When Stans threatened legislative action, the Japanese answered: "That's just politics—the President is trying to pay his debts to the South." The Commerce Secretary went to Wilbur Mills, and Mills responded with comments about the seriousness of the problem. Then the Japanese went to Mills and said they wanted the government to prove that imports were truly damaging American industry. "That sounds reasonable to me," Mills replied.

Meantime, in November, 1969, Mr. Nixon sent his first official message on trade to Congress. It was a modest package of proposals much



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WASHINGTON

like Lyndon Johnson's trade message. The Nixon proposals included provisions that would make it easier for U. S. companies to get government help when they could show that low-priced imports had ruined their markets. No quotas were proposed, but Mr. Nixon stated: "The textile import problem, of course, is a special circumstance that requires special measures. We are now trying to persuade other countries to limit their textile shipments to the United States. In doing so, however, we are trying to work out with our trading partners a reasonable solution which will allow both domestic and foreign producers to share equitably in the development of the U. S. market."

"Such measures should not be misconstrued, nor should they be allowed to turn us away from the basic direction of our progress toward freer exchange."

The rhetoric made little impression, however. The "special circumstances" of textiles dominated all trade policies. Stans, assigned to handle only the textile problem, was able by his vigor and determination to dominate the entire subject of trade, while the President's designated special trade representative, Carl J. Gilbert, was virtually ignored. A well-liked retired chairman of the Gillette Company who was an active supporter of free trade in private life, Gilbert could not hold his own in the bureaucratic snake pit when the Nixon trade policies were drawn.

"His style is to sit quietly and wait for someone to ask a question," one associate observed. Rumors were floated that Gilbert was ailing and would soon leave the government.

This situation worried officials at the State and Treasury Departments, who felt that the Administration was being pushed into a protectionist stance which would be disastrous for international political and financial relations. Each agency tried to assert its own interest, as did the President's Council of Economic Advisers.

From Congress, and the textile industry, there came continuous strong pressure. A delegation of congressmen led by Senator Thurmond and Congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn, also of South Carolina, called on the President to remind him of his pledges.

"I have been to the White House during the Eisenhower Administration, the Kennedy Administration, and the Nixon Administration," Thurmond told the Senate in June, "and we have pleaded and urged that action be taken. No action of consequence has been taken down through the years. A number of us have introduced legislation to try to get relief. But this legislation, it seems, has not had the backing of a single President in the sixteen years that I have been a senator. Therefore, it has not been passed."

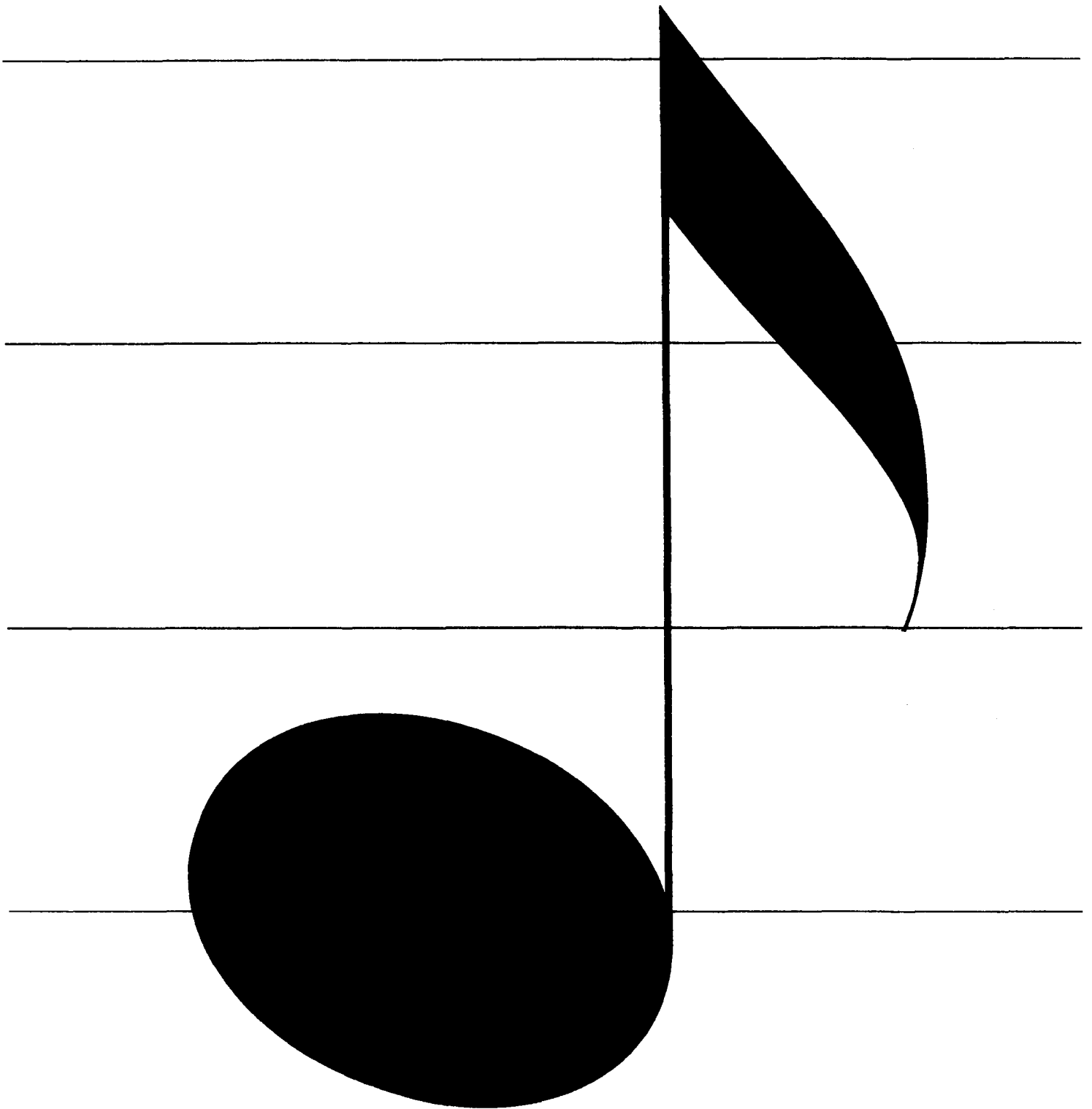
"Incredibly naïve"

On June 25, Stans told the Ways and Means Committee that, while the Administration "in principle is not in favor of quota legislation," it would support a mandatory quota on textiles as included in the Mills bill. The quota would not be invoked if the United States and the supplying nations reached a voluntary agreement. "It would be our intention never to cease in our efforts to negotiate fair agreements even after the passage of this legislation," Stans said.

Before Stans spoke, the White House tried to head off efforts by congressmen acting on behalf of the shoe industry by calling for a special study of the impact of imports on that hard-pressed segment of the economy. This was a part of the White House strategy for setting a legislative quota covering textiles alone.

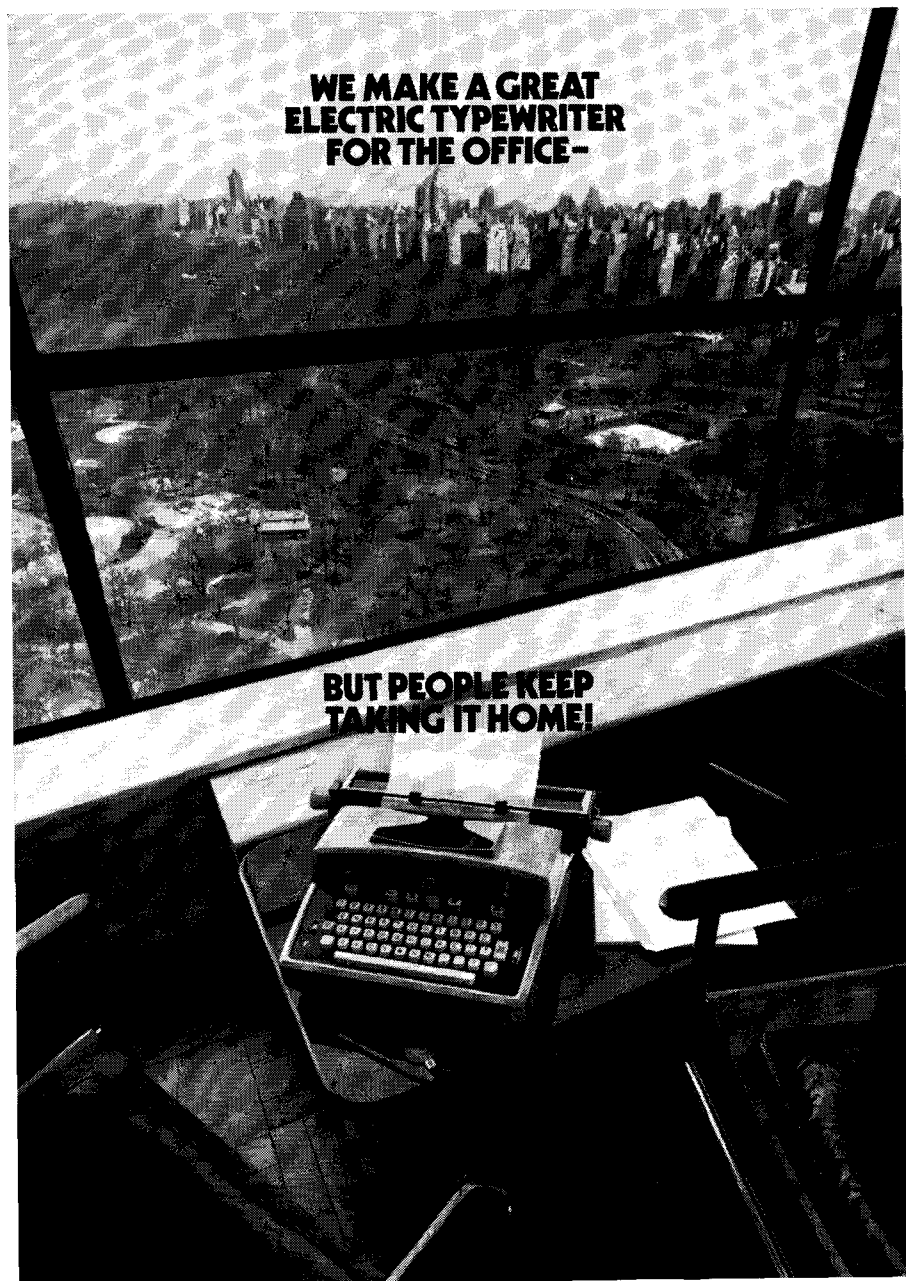
Speaking of the White House team headed by John D. Ehrlichman, a free trade lobbyist observed: "They are incredibly naïve. They bought the argument of the textile lobby that they could get a bill all the way through Congress with only one item covered." This White House decision also undercut Mills, who had only been trying to help the Administration gain an advantageous stance. "He never meant for that bill to get out of his committee," one associate said of Mills. "He told the White House that." Mills was appalled by the White House decision. "A President cannot come out in favor of a quota on a single commodity," Mills said. "He must be against all quotas. I warned them that if the White House opened the gate, Congress would tear the fence down."

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WASHINGTON

Means Committee approved not only the textile quota but one for shoes and voted to make the oil import quota, now imposed by presidential order, a permanent part of the law. A provision was approved to make quotas available, at the President's discretion, for many other commodities.

Now the White House was shocked. "The bill as it now stands is becoming dangerously postured," White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said. And Mr. Nixon himself called reporters into his Oval Office on July 20 and said he would "certainly veto" the trade bill "if it contains the provisions which I did not recommend."

"Speaking in general terms," he said, "first, quota legislation, mandatory quota legislation, is not in the interest of the United States. We are an exporting nation rather than an importing nation. It would mean in the end, while it would save some jobs, it would cost us more jobs in the exports that would be denied us, the export markets that would be denied us; and second, even more important, it is highly inflationary, as anybody who has studied tariffs and quotas through the years is well aware."

Still, the President stuck to the single quota strategy "in view of the enormous importance of the textile industry in this country" and the "lack of success" in negotiating an international agreement with the Japanese. "But, if the bill goes beyond that, if it, for example, includes other items, I would not be able to sign the bill, because that would set off a trade war which would have all the repercussions that I have tried to describe earlier," Mr. Nixon said.

By this time, however, the Administration had lost control of the legislation. The veto threat only made the Ways and Means Committee members angry. Several congressmen noted that the White House seemed more upset that the committee took the oil import quota out of the President's hands. "He wants to keep that right in the White House," one committee member said. "He wants to keep the industry nervous."

Like the free trade lobbyists, the White House misjudged the mood of Congress this year. Inflation and recession have put added pressure on industries already vulnerable to com-

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What you can't see is that Margaret is dying of malnutrition. She has periods of fainting, her eyes are strangely glazed. Next will come a bloated stomach, falling hair, parched skin. And finally, death from malnutrition, a killer that claims 10,000 lives every day.

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WASHINGTON

petition from low-cost overseas producers. For the first time in modern history, the AFL-CIO abandoned the free trade lobby and supported restrictions on textile, apparel, and shoe imports. The unions swallowed the embarrassment of standing side-by-side with the textile barons, who are among the most anti-union industrialists. When labor switched sides, the organized consumer lobby was neutralized, for the AFL-CIO has been one of its mainstays.

Mrs. Virginia Knauer, the President's consumer adviser, criticized the quota bill belatedly, but the most effective spokesmen for the buyers' viewpoint have been the retailers and discount store operators who know the low-priced imports have found an eager market among low-income Americans. Speaking for the American Retail Federation, Gardner Ackley, the University of Michigan economist who was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers for Lyndon Johnson, said the quota bill would "raise prices for shoes and for textiles, both domestic and imported, in four different ways."

The legislation would reduce the supply of items selling from 15 to 40 percent less than competing American goods; it would cut off some of the cheapest imports for which there are no American counterparts; it would raise prices on the imports that were allowed in; it would raise the price of American-produced products by removing some of their competition.

"It is clear that these consequences fly directly in the face of the enlarged interest in consumer protection recently evidenced both by the Administration and by the Congress," Ackley said. "I suggest that our only chance to persuade Japan—or other nations—to move more rapidly down the road toward more liberal trade would be destroyed were we to enact [the quota bill]. Some may take a certain gruesome satisfaction in pulling the house down on our heads because we find it so imperfect. I do not."

To many congressmen, however, it appears that the United States has been too generous in making trade concessions without getting sufficient returns from either the prosperous Japanese or the European Common

Market. "Uncle Sam has been Uncle Sucker," one Ways and Means member exploded in a closed session. Another predicted that the new restrictive legislation would never go into effect since the Japanese would finally negotiate when they were convinced Congress would act.

Others are not so sure. They expect the Japanese to postpone the lowering of their own trade barriers if we raise new ones, and they fear that many countries will retaliate directly at the two most vulnerable aspects of American international business—the sale of farm products overseas and investment of U. S. capital. "A protectionist tide seems to be sweeping the world which, if allowed to go unchecked, will bring only grief and disaster to the world in the form of an international trade war," Senator Jacob K. Javits (Rep., New York) observed.

This kind of argument, which has in the past rallied the lethargic free trade forces to defeat the protectionists, has failed this year. The free traders have lost their important labor allies and, so far, the appeals for massive consumer reaction to the danger of higher prices has stirred little interest. Instead, the best hope for saving the American position for free international trade rests with the senatorial tendency toward legislative absurdity. The upper house is likely to load up the quota bill with so many special interest provisions beyond those written by the House that the measure will be defeated, buried in a conference committee by Wilbur Mills, or vetoed by Mr. Nixon. In that case there would be enough blame for all to share.

—MURRAY SEEGER

DONORA, PENNSYLVANIA

Donora, Pennsylvania, is a steel mill town of 12,300 people, twenty-eight miles south of Pittsburgh. During the last five days of October, 1948, a heavy mixture of fog and smoke settled over the countryside, and by 11:30 Saturday night, October 30, seventeen persons were dead. The first died that morning. Four more, who became seriously ill at the time, died during the next two months. A government report later revealed that a total of 5910 persons, 42.7 percent

of the population, were made ill by the smog. Of those, 1440, or 10.4 percent, were "severely affected."

Front-page stories drew a comparison between the Donora incident and what had taken place in the Meuse Valley in Belgium in 1930, when sixty persons died from a concentration of fog and smoke. Both places were located in heavily industrialized areas. News accounts suggested that the Donora disaster, like the Belgium one, was the result of a freak weather condition—what weather authorities called a "temperature inversion." A layer of warm air descended over Donora, which is located at the bottom of a river valley. This sealed in smoke from locomotives and factories, automobile exhausts, and floating solid particles, probably fly ash. There was no wind to blow away this smog.

Two U.S. Steel installations were located in Donora—a zinc manufacturing plant and an enormous factory for forging iron from ore and making various steel products. The great open hearth furnaces used to burn night and day; they were back in full operation the week after the deaths.

Since the smog

For a year after the disaster, U.S. Public Health officials conducted a study and issued a report on "The Unusual Smog Episode of October, 1948," as they termed it. But the incident at Donora was more or less forgotten until the late 1960s, when the country became aroused over the issue of pollution. Students of the air pollution problem began to see Donora as the Hiroshima of their particular area of concern.

Today, the visitor driving south to Donora from Pittsburgh on Route 88 travels through lush valleys of prosperous towns: Castle Shannon, Library, Finleyville. One passes farms where the farmer himself can do a little strip mining of soft coal on his own land to heat his house. Entering Donora, the bus driver points to the site of the U.S. Steel zinc mill, now known to be the chief offender in the 1948 smog. Dismantled in 1956, it was located at the northern end of the town which is spread out on the steep west bank of the Monongahela River. Across the river from the old zinc plant site, the east bank is partly devoid of vegetation, exposing bright tan clay. "It used to be all barren,

nothing would grow there," a passenger remarks, "but it began to get green after the zinc plant went down." A Hercules Powder plant (which makes nitric acid) has replaced the zinc plant. Black smoke pours out of its chimney. Some of the stores are boarded up.

There used to be a sign on the road, as you entered Donora, which said: NEXT TO YOURS THE BEST TOWN IN THE U.S.A. Since the smog, the sign has been allowed to disintegrate. They now call their town HOME OF CHAMPIONS because Stan Musial, Arnold Galiffa, Bimbo Ceconi, and other great athletes came from here.

High on the windblown rim of the hill overlooking the bowl-shaped river valley are the town's cemeteries. Each religious denomination has its own. Up here all is peaceful. The family burial plots, planted with dated headstones, tell the story of the generations who lived and died in the town below. In St. Dominic's Catholic Cemetery, near the winding road inside the gates, the visitor can see a headstone marking the grave of Ivan Ceh: May 6, 1879-October 30, 1948. Only the date of his death hints that he figured in the Donora smog tragedy. There is no record in the town, even in the obituaries of the local newspaper, the *Donora Herald American*, that any of the twenty-two dead suffocated to death from smog that weekend. There was no combined memorial service at the time nor since. There is no mass grave, no monument.

U.S. Public Health Bulletin No. 306, titled: "Air Pollution in Donora, Pa., Epidemiology of the Unusual Smog Episode of October, 1948," recorded the sudden passing of the five women and seventeen men meticulously. Ivan Ceh was stricken at four o'clock in the morning of Thursday, October 28, and died forty-six hours later at two o'clock in the morning of Saturday, October 30. Nine more died in the next eight hours. The last of the twenty-one dead, George Weisdak, sixty-five, a retired zinc plant worker, died on Christmas Eve, 1948. As Ivan Ceh's obituary reveals, he was a fairly typical Donora citizen. He was born in Rilka, Yugoslavia, in 1879, arrived in the United States in 1901, settled in Donora in 1902, and worked in the steel mill. He was seventy and retired at the time of his death.

The Monongahela River, once brimming with fish and delightful

DONORA

swim in, winds into a horseshoe curve that almost makes an island of Donora. Today it is thoroughly polluted, mostly by acid from abandoned coal mines. The three hundred forty-two acres which make up the center of the town were once a farm bought by Nicholas Crist in 1769. In 1899, the plot was purchased by three businessmen: James McKean, for whom Donora's main street is named; Henry Clay Frick, the steel baron; and Andrew W. Mellon, who amassed one of America's largest fortunes.

William Donner built the first industrial plant along part of the three miles of riverfront. Steam locomotives and river barges powered by the soft coal in which the region abounds made the site ideal at the time, because they afforded easy transportation of fuel, raw materials, and steel and iron products. The town derived its name from combining the Don of Donner with Nora, the name of Andrew Mellon's wife. By 1908, the steel town of Donora was an important center in the U.S. Steel empire put together by J. P. Morgan.

From the beginning of the century, people of more than half a dozen nationalities lived and worked together in towns like Donora in the Monongahela Valley. Their children didn't have to leave to find work. They went straight from school into the mills. They married each other and set up new families. The pay was good and got better as the unions upped the wages. Donora grew and prospered. It was a friendly town. Everybody knew everybody else. They cared about each other: "We're a League of Nations town. We say to a guy, you dumb Russian or you Polack or you Guinea. Nobody minds. I'm Polish and my daughter married an Italian."

Living with heavy dense smoke and fog was part of their way of life. They equated factory chimneys, sending forth smoke to the skies, with prosperity: "That smoke coming out of those stacks is bread and butter on our tables."

Steel men in Donora, like most steel men, were a proud lot, proud of their special skills. Wages in various job categories could go to \$40 a day. There were three shifts to keep the plants going twenty-four hours a day.

Men strolled with their lunchpails down the hillside from their homes and loitered at the factory gates an hour or so before starting time: "When I walked through those doors to go to work I just felt good. I loved my work. I knew my job. And I liked the guys."

"Your footprints"

The 1948 smog lasted over a long weekend. On Tuesday morning, October 27, smoke from the locomotives' stacks spilled down toward the ground. You could hardly see ahead to walk or drive. There was a sweetish smell in the air. (It was sulfur dioxide.) The smog left a layer of dust on porches, on the sidewalks and pavement: "You could see your footprints if you looked back. Tires left the marks of their treads in the streets." The town's eleven doctors were soon getting telephone calls; patients were having trouble breathing or felt as if they were coughing their lungs out. "Everything was black with gas and soot; you could even taste it," Dr. William Rongaus recalls. "The odd thing was that two days later some of the people whom I had treated while they were gasping for breath denied they had been ill."

John Turner, the tall, gaunt driver of the Donora Fire Department truck, can still hear the wailing sirens of ambulances taking people to hospitals in the neighboring towns. "I hauled oxygen tanks around the clock. We'd knock on doors to see if people were all right. You'd put a sheet over the head of somebody who couldn't breathe and then turn on the oxygen. Automobiles kept stalling. I thought something was wrong with the timing. Then we realized it was the lack of oxygen."

Most Donora citizens recall the Halloween parade on Friday evening. It was an eerie sight: marchers striding forward holding white handkerchiefs to their faces, bands playing, all barely visible in the smoky haze and the autumn twilight. Donora High School won the \$25 prize as the best of the Monongahela Valley bands.

Then, a dead cat was discovered along the parade line, apparently run over by a car. An examination indicated that in fact it had suffocated. Halloween night, a black cat mysteriously dead; it seemed to Donora people a terrible omen of the disaster about to engulf the town. The next

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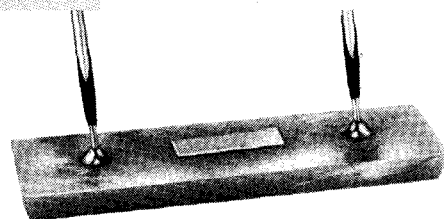
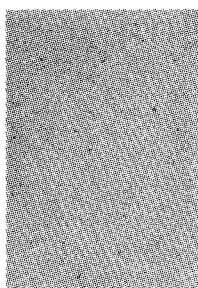
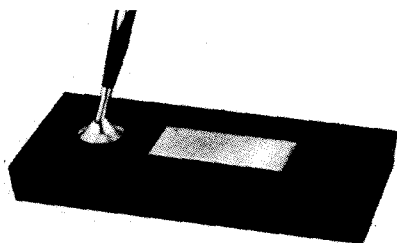
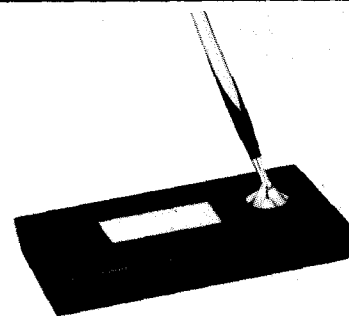
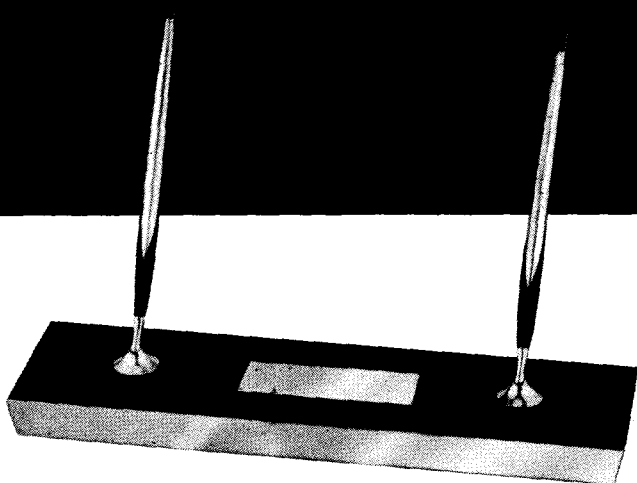
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DONORA

day, Saturday, word spread that people were sick and dying. Albert Del-sandro (who is now Donora's mayor) recalls carrying the ill and the dead out of their homes into ambulances. By ten in the morning Rudolph Schwerha, the town's leading undertaker, had nine bodies spread out in his funeral home.

"No change in the process"

"I can't conceive how our plant has anything to do with the condition. There has been no change in the process we use since 1915."—Superintendent, American Steel and Wire Company, October, 1948.

News writers, photographers, air pollution authorities began arriving in Donora as word of the disaster spread in print and on the air. Dr. Clarence Mills, an air pollution expert from the University of Cincinnati, arrived to study the Donora smog. He said chronic damage had been done for years to the lungs of the people in the valley.

Sunday, October 31, rain and winds cleared away the smog. On Tuesday, most of the dead were buried. It was, the citizens recall, one of the most beautiful fall days they had ever seen. The zinc and steel mills resumed their operations. Now Donora people began to resent the cries of alarm. It was disloyal to Donora and, besides, the talk could drive away the mills. But Dr. Rongaus, who had been through a grueling experience ministering to the sick and dying, described the deaths as "murder . . . those who died could have been saved. Those who failed to get a second dose of adrenalin died. The smoke was a silent killer. Something murdered them. One more night and the death toll would have been one thousand and twenty instead of twenty."

Several men across the river in the town of Webster tried to get a valley lawyer to sue U.S. Steel on behalf of the smog victims and the families of the dead. But local lawyers hesitated to take the case, probably, as Al Kline of Webster thinks, because they were afraid of offending U.S. Steel. Finally a Pittsburgh lawyer, Charles J. Margiotti, was engaged. He took the case with a \$500 retainer and the proviso that he would get one

third of any settlement. If the smog was "an act of God," he announced, there would be no suit, "but if it was the result of smoke from the mills, we'll sue." Doctors Rongaus and Mills felt sure that gases in the smoke fumes were responsible. Margiotti launched a \$4 million lawsuit against U.S. Steel. Families of some of the dead did sue in the end, as did some of those made ill.

The Webster citizens were signed up easily, but most Donora people were reluctant to press the suit. The group in Webster insisted on trying to make people aware that smoke from the mills was at fault. The leaders were Al Kline, the sports editor of the *Valley Republican*, and Abe Celapino, owner of a restaurant and a stone quarry. Earl Klein, a lawyer who later became a judge, helped and did legal work without a fee. They organized and incorporated The Society For Better Living, sent out some forty press releases, and enlisted the help of air pollution authorities around the country.

When the U.S. Public Health people came to the valley to do a study, they were wined and dined by Al Kline, Abe Celapino, and others from Webster. "We tried to make them understand what had happened," Kline said recently, "but it didn't do any good. We still got a wishy-washy report. I think they were afraid of making U.S. Steel liable for damages."

The published report was not very enlightening or specific. It did say that weather had something to do with the smog, and that October was the "optimum" month for smog at Donora because of the frequency of "stagnant deep anti-cyclones." Illness from the smog was "essentially an irritation of the respiratory tract and other exposed mucous membranes, and varied in degree from mild to severe." The report discussed the existence in the air of fluoride, chloride, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, sulfur trioxide, and other gases. But it did not "appear probable . . . that any one of these substances *by itself* [italics added] was capable of producing the syndrome [irritation of the respiratory tract]."

U.S. Steel, despite a virtual clearance by the Public Health Service report, decided to settle the Webster lawsuits out of court as a package deal for about \$250,000. Four million dollars had been asked. The lawyers got a third, about \$83,000.

Families of the dead who sued got \$5000 per fatality. Those made ill got \$1000 apiece.

The Webster group met with Clifford Wood, president of American Steel and Wire, the U.S. Steel subsidiary. As Al Kline recalls, "He was extremely cordial, said he sympathized with us and would feel the same way if he lived in the Donora area. He was very impressive. Said they agreed smoke from the mills killed vegetation."

Forgetting

The crusade against smoke died out, and Donora entered the 1950s with increasing anxiety that all this talk about the smog would result in the mills leaving town. In 1957 U.S. Steel closed the zinc plant for good. People believed the company was angry because of the lawsuits and had concluded Donora was in danger of another smog. Many people viewed the tragedy as, literally, "an act of God." They argued: "Weren't the people who got sick or died all old people?" (Their ages ranged from fifty-two to eighty-four, and the mean age was sixty-five, according to the U.S. Public Health Service report.) "Wasn't the 'temperature inversion' a freak of nature?"

The companies denied rumors that the rest of the mills would leave town. But in 1960, the company discontinued making iron and steel in Donora and shut down two blast furnaces, thirteen open hearth furnaces, and five steel product mills. Seventeen hundred out of forty-four hundred workers were laid off. Now the town felt itself thoroughly doomed. The smog seemed to have cast a curse on the valley. Merchants were forced out of business, and many families left town. U.S. Steel did employ some of the Donora steel workers at its new Fairless Hills plant near Philadelphia three hundred miles away.

As it happened, U.S. Steel had tentative plans to phase out its Donora mills long before the 1948 smog. Already obsolete in the 1940s, they had been kept open owing to the demands of war production. The great coke-burning open hearth furnaces were obsolete. Oxygen and electric furnaces were the new things. Besides, Donora's steep hillside roads made truck access difficult, especially in winter. Rather than modernize an old plant, it was more economic to build

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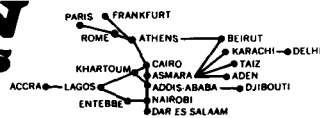


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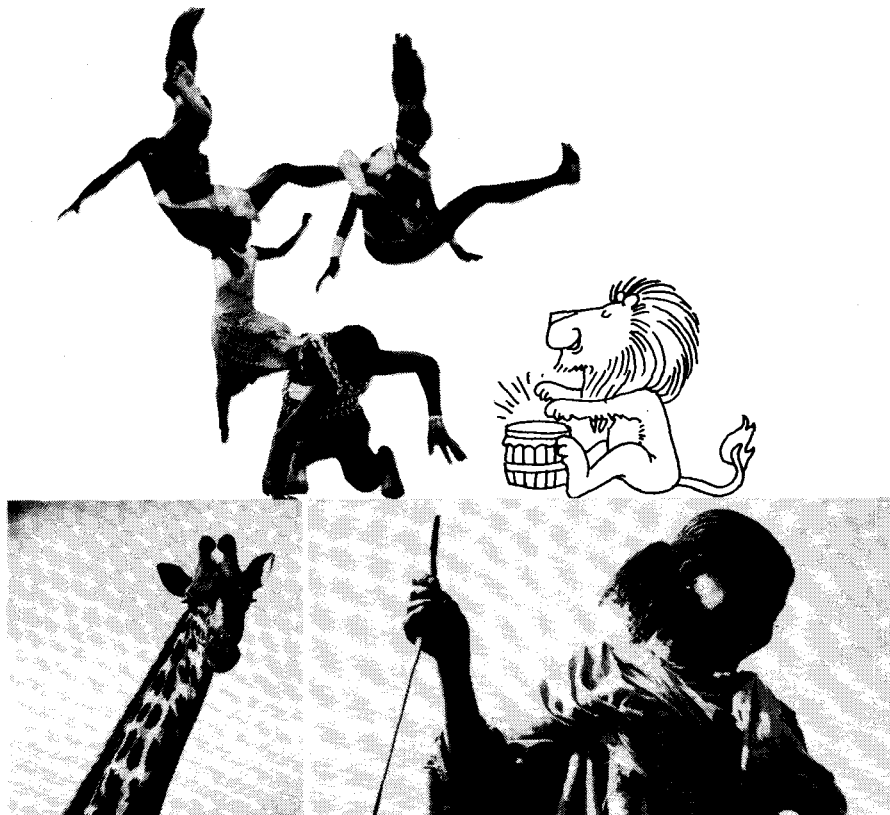
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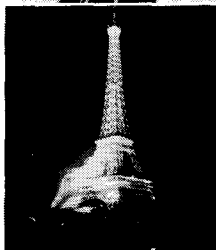
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DONORA

new factories in new open space locations with planned housing conditions. Early in February, 1966, U.S. Steel officially announced the end of all its operations in Donora.

Although there was growing national concern about air pollution, the citizens of Donora immediately set about trying to persuade companies to build factories in their town. One of the objectives was to create jobs for young people. The Chamber of Commerce set up what it called Operation Native Son. There was a Society for a Green Donora. Trees, purchased from the state, were planted. Hercules Powder was one of the first plants to move in. A dozen or so followed. Smoke from factory chimneys again rose from the valley.

Donora refuses to pass ordinances designed to control smoke. It is argued that cars, buses, home and commercial heating systems, engines from locomotives and riverboats all are part of the air pollution problem. This view found support in the U.S. Public Health Service report. Reforms suggested in the report were adopted elsewhere in the valley, but not in Donora. The Weather Bureau instituted a system to warn of an impending temperature inversion or bad smog condition. Companies began installing air pollution devices. Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, in nearby Monessen, invested \$4.8 million in such devices as an electrostatic precipitator and a graphite collection system. The company claimed a 70 percent reduction in dust fall. When a smog warning goes out, companies are told to cut back on production.

But people in Donora take a more traditional view. "Except for the lesson to be learned by other communities," a Donora *Herald American* editor wrote a few years ago, "this small Pennsylvania town could wish for nothing better than to have the world forget 'the Donora episode.'"

—CROSWELL BOWEN

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

Flora Lewis, national and foreign correspondent for *Newsday*, was recently in Asia. Murray Seeger is a member of the Los Angeles *Times* Washington Bureau, specializing in economic news. Croswell Bowen is a free-lance writer whose work has appeared in a number of magazines.



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THE MAIL

More on pesticides

SIR: *The Atlantic* is to be commended for including a discussion of the dangers of DDT and other pesticides to human and animal life in the Reports section in September, 1970.

I'd like to comment, however, on the revelation that human milk contains a minute amount of DDT.

First of all, there is reason to question the accuracy of the analyses of human milk referred to, owing to the presence in the milk, in some measure, of a substance from the plastic containers in which many of the mother's milk samples were stored. The following information has recently been given to La Leche League International (an organization of mothers who teach and encourage those who wish to breast-feed) by Dr. Thomas Jukes of the Donner Laboratory of the University of California: "The Food and Drug Administration has just reported that milk contains polychlorinated biphenyls, which are present in plastics and which give a result in the test that can be confused with DDT."

Furthermore, the recommended levels of DDT in milk as set forth by the Food and Drug Administration are based upon estimated lifetime ingestion of the pesticide. Even assuming that the tests were accurate, breast-fed babies would still be taking in only a tiny, nontoxic amount of DDT during the nursing period. Were they to change to artificial formula, physicians would most likely recommend an earlier introduction of solid foods (many containing DDT) to provide needed nutrients lacking in the formula.

Scientists around the country, and La Leche League International's Medical Advisory Board of more than thirty reputable physicians, state em-

phatically that mothers should not abandon breast-feeding for fear of DDT contamination. Breast-feeding's many advantages to the human baby—superior nutrition, ready assimilation, better resistance to disease, promotion of emotional security, to name only a few—far outweigh the tiny, nontoxic amount of DDT in mother's milk, an amount which holds no peril for the nursing baby, as far as scientific knowledge is able to establish.

MARY P. RACETTE
*President, Syracuse Chapter
La Leche League International
Syracuse, N.Y.*

SIR: Many of the statements made as proved fact by Mr. Frank Graham in his Pesticides Report are conjecture or open to considerable question. The flat statement that "DDT causes cancer in laboratory rodents and in trout" is wrong. Arguments have raged for fifteen years about the hepatomas in mice fed DDT. It is far from clear that these tumors are cancerous or that their meaning can be interpreted in terms of man. The Food and Drug Administration scientists, among others, have not believed these tumors to be cancerous. The tumors in trout were shown to be caused by aflatoxin, a naturally occurring carcinogen produced by the fungus *Aspergillus flavus*. The trout feed was contaminated by the aflatoxin.

We have many varieties of scientists these days. Some always "view with alarm," some always defend the status quo. But the fact that a scientist makes a statement, or a physician says something, is not evidence for the validity of the statement. People must eat. Contrary to most current opinion, food doesn't come from the supermarket, it comes from the farm. To grow food on the farm we still need pesticides. Mr. Graham offers no suggestions for protecting man

from insects which compete with us for food and cause disease. He even misstates the Public Health Service position regarding a "safe" pest-control method, the Shell "No-Pest Strip," which has not been disapproved for home use. Eliminating the need for sprays and bottles and cans of insecticide reduces the hazard to children and probably reduces unnecessary chemical exposure.

A balanced presentation of the pesticide situation is badly needed in order to put man and man's needs in proper perspective. Mr. Graham has succumbed to the prevalent cant.

MITCHELL R. ZAVON, M. D.
*Assistant Health Commissioner
City of Cincinnati
Consultant, Shell Chemical*

SIR: The Shell NO-PEST® Strip is made of plastic, not paper. We still feel that it is one of the most effective and one of the safest ways to protect homes from the menace of flies.

ARTHUR NORTHWOOD, JR.,
*Manager, Chemical Public Relations
Shell Chemical Company*

Mr. Graham replies:

There is no reason to doubt the expert analyses of mother's milk. For several years the pro-DDT spokesmen have tried to obscure the evidence against DDT by suggesting that scientists are confusing DDT residues with those of polychlorinated biphenyls. This suggestion is emphatically rejected by the scientists who have compiled the evidence.

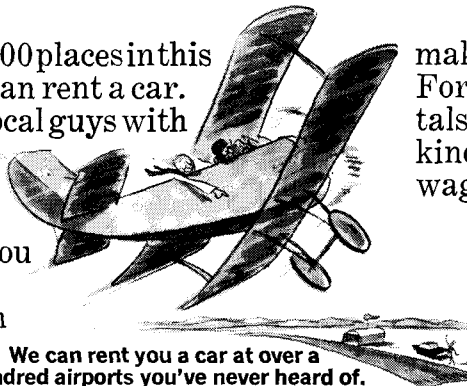
However, I agree with Mrs. Racette that the benefits of breast-feeding at this time seem to outweigh the hazards of DDT intake. I simply pointed out that some doctors who take seriously the increased amounts of DDT in mother's milk, compared with those in cow's milk, have reservations about this practice.

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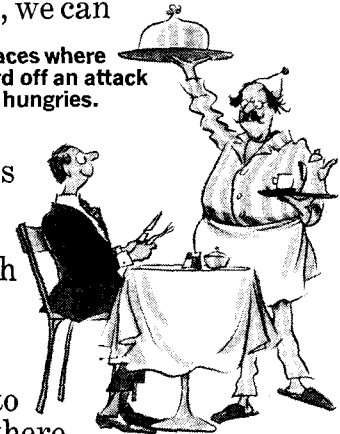
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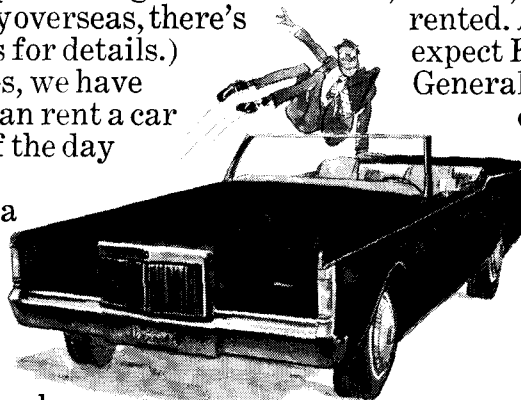


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I am afraid that it is Dr. Zavon who is wrong. HEW's Mrak Report of last December, page 471, says "the evidence for carcinogenicity of DDT in experimental animals is impressive and the Panel takes no exception to the conclusions as to DDT recorded in the report of the National Cancer Institute's study. This study has demonstrated that DDT increased the incidence of cancer in milk under the experimental conditions employed."

I suggest that Dr. Zavon also consult the *New York Times* of August 4, 1970, which reported that Dr. Marvin Legator, chief of FDA's cell biology division, had discovered DDT causes mutagens in rat genes, a discovery he said was "predictable" in light of earlier reports showing that DDT causes cancerous tumors in animals.

For a history of the Public Health Service's disapproval of the pest strips, I suggest interested readers consult the frightening report on this subject by the House Committee on Government Operations, November, 1969. Criticisms of the Shell pest strip are there clearly documented. In recent actions, the USDA has ordered Shell to add labels prohibiting use of these strips "in kitchens, restaurants, or areas where food is prepared or served," as well as in rooms frequented by infants, the ill, and the elderly.

I will accept Mr. Northwood's word that the strips are made of plastic and not paper, but in view of the PHS and FDA studies, I submit that it is the poisons and not the plastic that are at issue.

The critics and the public

SIR: In the course of Robert Evett's very interesting article "The Critics and the Public" (*Atlantic*, September) he says about Marian Anderson that in 1939 "the DAR refused to let her sing in their hall because the Daughters were white and she was not."

We of the DAR are accustomed to this charge, but it somehow never fails to irk us—for it is false.

Incidentally, race is *not* a qualification for becoming a DAR. A woman must simply show proof that she is directly descended from a man or woman who helped the cause of America's independence.

ABIGAIL ANN HAMBLIN
Newton, Mass.

SIR: Robert Evett, after naming Pablo Casals among musicians he claims should long ago have ended their careers, solicits sympathy: "Nobody wants a reputation for abusing a nice old man. . . . It sounds cruel, and it is, to say that an artist who doesn't know when it is time to stop should be silenced."

Many musicians, like myself, go to Marlboro, Vermont, every summer just to listen to Casals conduct rehearsals. We would continue to go if he were thirty-three instead of ninety-three and were not known south of the Green Mountains, so long as he gave the usual great performance. It is the same with the musicians who play under his direction. Many are among the ablest in the country and can, when they choose, play at the world's greatest musical centers—to suggest that such people are influenced merely by Casals' age and prestige is utter nonsense.

As for the inference that Casals still plays to keep his own ego inflated, the fact is that every year he turns down endless invitations to play at places where he would receive the greatest publicity and top money. He prefers Marlboro simply because he loves the climate and the people of that small but exclusive music community. And what he loves best about it, as he frequently remarks, is that there he finds total freedom from any sort of artificial attention—the kind of attention Evett seems to think he likes.

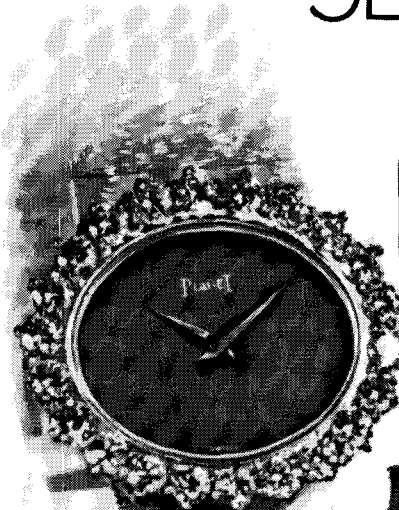
For my part, the Evett view of Casals is the most appalling combination of ignorance, maliciousness, and bad taste I have yet seen in print. I can only hope, as I'm sure thousands of other musicians would hope, that the magazine will make some sincere effort to redress this needless insult to the most respected, admired, and loved musician of our time.

NEWTON F. TOLMAN
Marlborough, N.H.

Robert Evett replies:

Miss Hamblen encloses a statement issued in 1966 by the NSDAR, which purports to clarify the "Marian Anderson incident." The statement explains that "in order to bring Constitution Hall into line with public policy and customs, and to comply with public opinion and usage, the DAR, in 1932, was forced to put the 'white artists only' clause into its

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rental contracts." This clause, the statement affirms, was operative in January, 1939, when the request for a concert booking on April 9 for Miss Anderson was received.

That date, says the DAR, was previously taken by the National Symphony, and Miss Anderson's representative was so informed. In February of 1939, Sol Hurok, Miss Anderson's agent, requested a booking for either April 8 or 10, when, he had been informed, the Hall was vacant. The DAR reply, as spelled out in its own brochure, was that "the rules governing the use of Constitution Hall are in accordance with the policy of theaters, auditoriums, hotels and public schools of the District of Columbia," and that "the Hall is not available for a concert by Miss Anderson."

What that means, quite simply, is that the Daughters refused to let Miss Anderson appear in Constitution Hall in 1939 because of the color of her hide.

As for Mr. Tolman, the point I was attempting to make was that to attack anyone as sacred as Pablo Casals was in such wretched taste that hardly anyone would do it. It seems to me

that Mr. Tolman has proven my point far more eloquently than I could have done it myself.

California Report

SIR: In your August issue, Mary Ellen Leary (Report on California) states that Ronald Reagan is ineligible to seek a third term as governor in 1974, if elected to a second term in 1970.

Actually, California has no limit on the number of terms a governor may serve, though only Republican Earl Warren was elected three times, in 1942, 1946, and 1950. Progressive Republican Hiram Johnson was elected in 1910 and in 1914, and Democrat Edmund G. ("Pat") Brown in 1958 and in 1962.

LOWELL S. MENGEL II
Eureka, Calif.

SIR: Mary Ellen Leary's recent Report claims that the Republican Party's structure is controlled by an "archconservative kitchen cabinet" made up of the likes of Leonard Firestone and Holmes Tuttle.

However, Mr. Firestone and Mr. Tuttle have been the leading financiers of the liberal, progressive branch of the Republican Party. Firestone

was the chairman of "Californians for Rockefeller" when the New York governor attempted to challenge Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential primary. He also was an outspoken supporter of the black ultra-liberal Tom Bradley, candidate for mayor of Los Angeles. Tuttle was a member of the finance committee to re-elect liberal congressman Alphonzo Bell, who beat off a conservative challenge in the June primary.

MARK PIERCE
Los Angeles, Calif.

Miss Leary replies:

My assumption that the California legislature had passed a 1966 bill prohibiting a gubernatorial third term proves to have been a hasty one. I regret the error.

As for the "archconservatives," political labels are always hazardous, and quite possibly too subjective to be useful. Whatever the case, Mr. Tuttle is present co-chairman of Governor Reagan's campaign committee, and was co-chairman of his finance committee when Reagan ran for governor four years ago. Mr. Firestone is co-chairman of Senator Murphy's finance committee, and was a principal sponsor of a major fund dinner in his honor on October 15. One of the misfortunes of current California politics is that there are virtually no moderates on the scene for a man like Mr. Firestone to support.

Who signed it?

SIR: Re Theodore H. White's "Episode in Tokyo Bay" (August *Atlantic*): who signed the surrender document, General Douglas MacArthur or General Jonathan Wainwright?

RICHARD HEALION
Norwood, O.

According to the *New York Times*, September 2, 1945, General Wainwright did not sign the document; he was simply presented with one of the pens with which MacArthur had signed (five in all).

—The Editor



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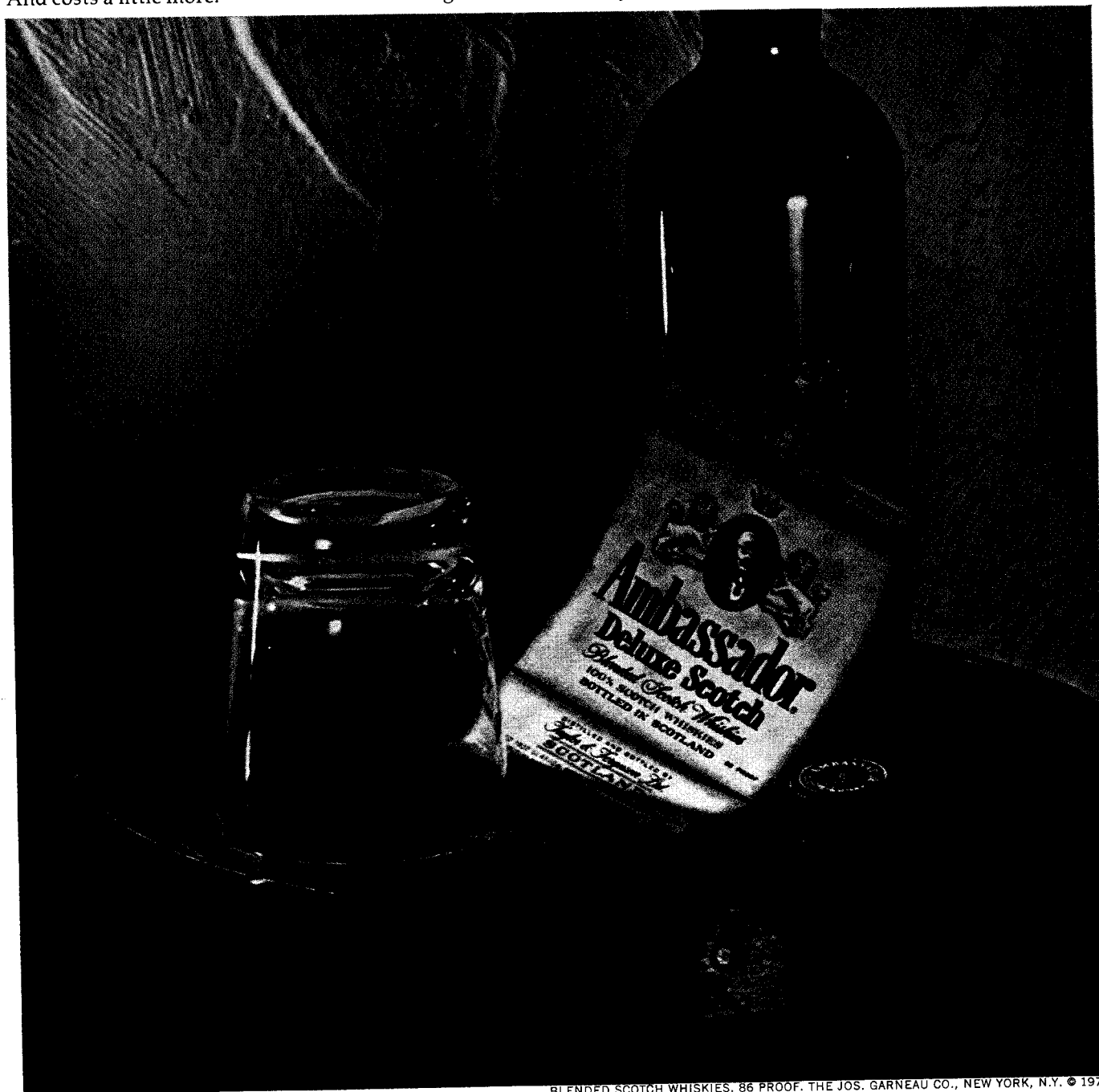
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THE GOVERNMENT AND MARTIN LUTHER KING

by Victor S. Navasky

Two of the principal actors—Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy—are dead; the third—J. Edgar Hoover—holds most of the secrets to himself. In this reconstruction, the result of six years of analysis and detective work, a lawyer-turned-writer pieces together the facts about the disturbing case of Washington's spying on Dr. King.

No episode of Robert Kennedy's Attorney Generalship is surrounded by more confusion, misinformation, and misunderstanding than the tapping of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, telephone. The confusion comes from three sources. First, the general failure to distinguish tapping from bugging—the complicated constitutional, moral, and legal issues involved in each, and the consequent veil of mystery which always cloaks anything to do with electronic surveillance. Even President Nixon contributed to public misunderstanding when he stated during his news conference of June 19, 1969, that he personally checked to see whether J. Edgar Hoover, the Director of the FBI, had acted "on his own or with proper authority" in ordering wiretaps on Dr. King and Elijah Muhammad, the Black Muslim leader. "I find it [the wiretapping] had always been approved by the Attorney General as Mr. Hoover testified in 1964 and 1965," Mr. Nixon said.

Perhaps. But most of the rumors about listening in

on Dr. King relate, not to taps, but to transcripts of bugs, unmentioned by the President, and a subtlety lost on the general population. This confusion is made without regard to ideology or party. The radical columnist I. F. Stone made the same error when he wrote (June 30, 1969):

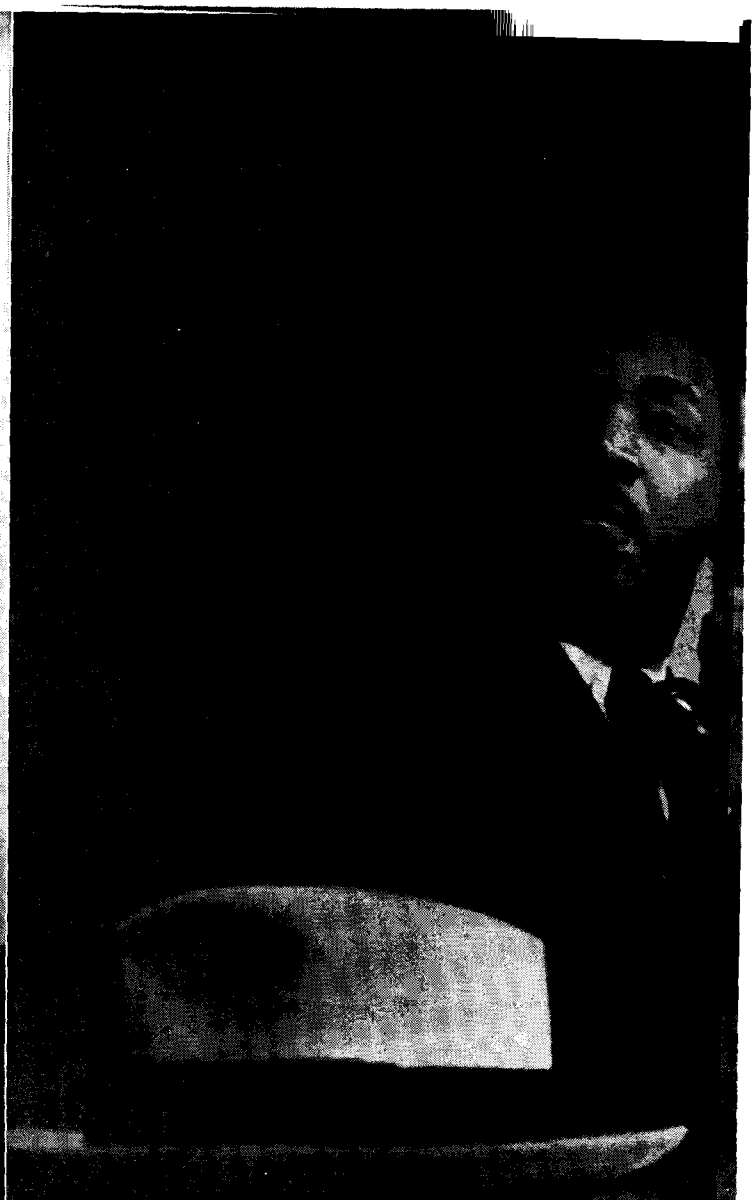
While the excuse for tapping King's phones was "internal security" its chief result was to permit the FBI to spread stories about his sex life.

And *Time* magazine recently (August 17, 1970) fell into the same trap when it reported:

From a security viewpoint, the wiretaps uncovered nothing. But, Williams reports, they did turn up an astonishing amount of information about King's extensive and vigorous sexual activities.

The distinction between tapping and bugging is important because at the time (1963), tapping in national security matters with the authorization of the Attorney General was thought to be legal, whereas the legal status of bugging was at best murky; Robert Kennedy admitted to authorizing wiretaps, on a case-by-case basis in the national security area, but he never admitted to authorizing FBI bugs; and bugging, which can pick up sounds anywhere in a room and beyond (as distinguished from tapping, which is limited to telephone conversations), constitutes a greater, and less selective, privacy invasion, something in the nature of a fishing expedition.

Second, Robert Kennedy's ambiguous and inconclusive "denials" while alive. During his presidential



try of 1968, when Drew Pearson printed the charge that Kennedy had authorized a tap on Dr. King's phone, Kennedy answered indirectly. He said the only taps he had authorized were in the national security area, and he was forbidden by law to say who was and wasn't tapped. A disingenuous statement, since it sounded—to the uninitiated—like a denial. After all, to the layman "national security" conjures up images of Russian spy rings, the theft of an A-bomb sketch, the passing of papers to a Soviet attaché. In fact, Kennedy's elliptic assertion was consistent with the admission that he had authorized the tapping of King's phone for "national security" purposes, as he did. His campaign press spokesman at the time, Pierre Salinger, careful to make the distinction President Nixon later failed to make, nevertheless compounded the inaccurate implication (although technically telling no lie) when he announced in Portland, Oregon: "Senator Kennedy never authorized any eavesdropping [surveillance by hidden microphones] while Attorney General. He did authorize wiretaps in cases involving national security and on written request of the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Asked specifically whether Kennedy had authorized a wiretap on the late Dr. King, Mr. Salinger replied: "Senator Kennedy has not in the past and will not now discuss individual cases."

Candidate Kennedy, of course, had no trouble denying that he had bugged or tapped Jimmy Hoffa's phone—law or no law, individual case or not—since to the best of his knowledge he hadn't, and it was to his advantage to say so. When I asked Robert Kennedy, the day after his Indiana primary victory in the spring of 1968, whether or not he knew of *any* bugs in the organized crime area (except in Las Vegas, where he ordered them removed as soon as he found out about them), his proof that he didn't was the fact that he hadn't authorized, nor did he know of, any illegal bugging of Jimmy Hoffa. "You would think if I was going to bug anybody," he said, "I would bug the one man everybody said I was out to get—Hoffa. Maybe I should have known about the bugging practices, but the fact was that I didn't."

Third, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's misleading charges, after both Dr. King and Mr. Kennedy were dead, in June of 1969, that Robert Kennedy, while Attorney General, proposed and approved over the FBI's ob-



jection to tap on Dr. King's phone because he was "concerned about reports that Dr. King was a student of Marxism and that he was associating with known subversives—men with Communist connections." These claims echoed the earlier FBI-leaked charges leveled by Drew Pearson during the Oregon McCarthy-Kennedy primary in 1968, and were consistent with Hoover's general attitude. As one former agent (a ten-year veteran) told me, "I think Mr. Hoover was convinced that Martin Luther King was a Communist . . ."

So first, to clear the air, a little Q and A:

Q. Was Martin Luther King's phone tapped?

A. Yes.

Q. Did Bobby know about it?

A. Yes.

Q. At whose instigation was it tapped?

A. The FBI's.

Q. Why?

A. The FBI claimed that a so-called secret Communist who was also a close friend of Dr. King's was trying to influence him on behalf of the Soviet Union. They requested authorization to tap Martin Luther King's phone ostensibly to see if the friend was hav-

ing any success. Robert Kennedy granted it in October of 1963, according to his intimates (a) because the civil rights bill was coming up, and if Dr. King were in any way tainted with Communist connections, it could be used to defeat the bill, whose passage they thought "critical to the viability of the nation"; (b) to protect Dr. King—to prove to the FBI that he was *not* being influenced by Communist agents; (c) to make the FBI, which had been wanting to tap Dr. King since 1961, happy.

Q. Did all the rumors about Dr. King's active extracurricular sex life arise from the wiretap which Kennedy authorized?

A. No. The authorized taps were restricted to King's offices and perhaps his home. Those rumors arose from bugs installed either by local police forces or on the FBI's own initiative without the specific authorization or knowledge of Attorney General Kennedy or anybody on his staff. Alleged transcripts of these bugs of "goings on" in Dr. King's hotel room were shown by the FBI to selected reporters and leaked to congressmen. Columnist Mike Royko of the *Chicago Daily News* and Congressman Robert L. F. Sikes (Dem., Florida) of the Appropriations

Committee, for instance, both concede that they have been shown such transcripts (although Royko declined to use the "information"). Hence the confusions, rumors, and half-truths.

Q. By what authority did Kennedy authorize the tap on Dr. King's phone?

A. Under departmental practice dating back to Attorney General Jackson (based on a letter written by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 in anticipation of our entry into World War II), the Attorney General has felt free to authorize wiretaps in writing on a case-by-case basis when the national security is involved. Since the FBI claimed that a so-called secret Communist was attempting to influence Dr. King to the benefit of a foreign power, the Attorney General believed when he authorized the tap that he was acting under the national security exception to Section 605 of the Federal Communications Act, which prohibited the interception and divulgence of interstate messages. (It has since been superseded by the Crime Control Act of 1968.)

Q. By what authority did the FBI bug Dr. King?

A. Prior to the passage of the Crime Control Act of 1968,¹ which authorized bugs in certain cases, the FBI claimed—although it didn't assert this claim until some years later—general authority to bug on its own initiative by virtue of a memo signed in 1954 by then Attorney General Herbert Brownell which, according to the FBI, gave them the right to bug in cases involving "internal security and the national safety" without getting the case-by-case approval of the Attorney General.

Q. Did Attorney General Robert Kennedy know of this memo when he was Attorney General?

A. No.

Q. Did Attorney General Robert Kennedy know of the FBI's illegal bugging practices when he was Attorney General?

A. No.

Q. Did Attorney General Robert Kennedy know of the specific bugs on Martin Luther King?

A. No.

Q. Did Attorney General Robert Kennedy know as a general proposition that the FBI was bugging anybody?

A. Probably, but he assumed it was confined to the organized crime area, and he assumed it was within the law.

Q. Did Attorney General Robert Kennedy know of any bugs on Dr. King?

A. Not specifically, although he may have suspected that local law-enforcement officers were bugging Dr. King and that the FBI occasionally got access to their tapes.

¹ But after the Supreme Court handed down its opinion in the Silverman case in March of 1961, which outlawed any bug whose installation entailed an illegal trespass and suggested that physical trespass might not be necessary at all for an intrusion as defined by the Fourth Amendment. *Silverman v. U. S.*, 365 U. S. 505 (1961).

Such, in outline, is the Kennedy version of the tapping of Dr. Martin Luther King's telephone. When I say Kennedy version I mean it is consistent with what he admitted to when he was alive; it is consistent with what his informed colleagues, subordinates, and supporters have conceded after he died; and it is consistent with a reasonable interpretation of those documents which have come to light since.

It is inconsistent only in part with J. Edgar Hoover's version, which he put out—with his infallible sense of timing—after the murders of Dr. King and Senator Robert Kennedy, respectively. On Mr. Hoover's behalf it should be noted that he put out the FBI version only after the Bureau was embarrassed by the open court testimony of an agent in a June, 1969, hearing on Cassius Clay's appeal, in an otherwise unrelated case, that he overheard telephone calls between King and Clay when he was assigned to the FBI's Atlanta office, where his duties included monitoring a tap on Dr. King's phone. The agent said he had conducted the surveillance until May, 1965, when he was transferred from his post, but he understood that the tap was continued by the FBI until a few days before King was assassinated. Since President Johnson had prohibited (by Executive Order issued June 30, 1965) all wiretapping without the specific approval of the Attorney General, and since Ramsey Clark, Attorney General during much of this period, said he never authorized a tap or bug on King's telephone, either the agent was misinformed (which FBI agents are not supposed to be—at least not in public) or the FBI had intentionally broken the law and ignored a presidential directive. In either event, it meant bad publicity for the Bureau. Mr. Hoover's solution had the virtue of simplicity: he put out a bigger story, and the nation's attention immediately shifted from the FBI's blunder to the murdered Robert Kennedy and Mr. Hoover's revelatory memoranda involving him.

Below, I shall set forth first the FBI story of what happened, second the points at which the FBI version and the Kennedy version conflict, and finally my own understanding of what happened.

According to Mr. Hoover (as told to FBI friend Jeremiah O'Leary of the *Washington Star*), Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy first proposed tapping Dr. King's phone in June of 1963. Hoover has a memo from Courtney Evans, the FBI's liaison to the Attorney General, to "prove" it.

The Evans memorandum—unreleased at this writing—reports the substance of a conversation Evans had just had with Kennedy in which the Attorney General (a) expressed his concern about reports that King was a student of Marxism and that he was associating with a New York attorney with known Communist connections; and (b) wanted to know if it was technically feasible to use electronic devices to prove or disprove these allegations.

According to the memo, Evans pointed out that King traveled constantly and thus was a bad candidate for a tap; also that the FBI doubted the advisability of electronic surveillance because of possible political repercussions.

Nevertheless, on October 7, 1963, the FBI reported to Kennedy that it was technically feasible to apply wiretaps to King's telephones at the SCLC headquarters in Atlanta and at an unnamed location in New York. Again, Mr. Hoover has a memo to "prove" it, this one the FBI's request to proceed with the tap "proposed" by Kennedy four months earlier. Kennedy approved the FBI request by signing the authorization on October 10, 1963, and the tap remained until April 30, 1965 (when Katzenbach was Attorney General). Thus, by Hooverian implication, did Robert Kennedy betray his friend and the civil rights movement with which the Administration was so closely identified.

Hoover's version was, of course, attacked and discredited by the men who had been around Kennedy at the time, as well as by Nicholas Katzenbach and Ramsey Clark, successor Attorneys General (each of whom had, of course, also served under Kennedy). The Kennedy version conflicts with the Hoover version in two essentials: (1) Kennedyites say the tap was Hoover's idea and installed at his urging; and (2) they deny that Kennedy ever entertained doubts about Dr. King's loyalty. "To say or imply that this tap was the original conception of Robert Kennedy—that he was the moving force in this situation—or that he had any doubts whatsoever as to Dr. King's integrity or loyalty is false," observes Nicholas Katzenbach.

Ramsey Clark, who followed Katzenbach in the job, adds that it was "deceptive" for Hoover to portray the FBI as "a reluctant eavesdropper of Dr. King," because "Mr. Hoover repeatedly requested me to authorize FBI wiretaps on Dr. King while I was Attorney General. The last of these requests, none of which was granted, came two days before the murder of Dr. King."

My own inquiries have not been entirely satisfactory because (a) the FBI has given no cooperation; and (b) the men closest to Kennedy have given only limited cooperation, which they attribute entirely to their obligation not to divulge classified material, although one suspects they are also loyal and zealous protectors of the Kennedy reputation. But based on literally hundreds of interviews, exposure to *some* unpublished memoranda to, from, and about the FBI, and a careful reading of all published material concerning the King case, I feel confident

that the reconstruction which follows is the most accurate account yet published of what happened. If there are any inaccuracies, it goes without saying that they were not intended, and perhaps they will smoke out Burke Marshall (Kennedy's Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights), Courtney Evans, or Nicholas deBelleville Katzenbach, each of whom is in a position to give a full and frank account of this strange episode in Robert Kennedy's career.

From the first days of Robert Kennedy's Attorney Generalship the FBI began forwarding memoranda reporting "information" that one Stanley Levison, a New York lawyer, a close friend and confidant of Martin King, represented a danger to Dr. King. The precise nature of the charges advanced against Levison I have been unable to find out. Whatever they said, the allegations were specific and serious.

They also charged, in a vaguer way, that Jack O'Dell, a member of the SCLC staff, was either a "Communist" or a "secret Communist," and claimed he had been recommended to the SCLC staff by Levison (which Levison denies). In informal conversation the FBI let it be known that they would like to tap Dr. King's telephone, but they gathered that Kennedy was not receptive to the idea.

All of this data is, of course, technically "unevaluated"—to borrow Bureau terminology. But FBI memos build on each other, so that what is "an informant of unknown reliability" in one memo becomes "as referred to in our memo of [date]" in a second memo, etc. And, according to one Kennedyite, "There were exceptions [to the rule against evaluating data] in the memos about Dr. King which have no parallel in other FBI memoranda. They would sort of summarize a lot of data in a way that I can only term a personal attack." Burke Marshall says unequivocally, "I think the FBI and Mr. Hoover deliberately set out to get Martin King."

Kennedy had, among others, Harris Wofford—JFK's civil rights man in the White House—approach King and underline the importance of King breaking off with these men who, according to FBI representation, might be "under Communist control," as one Justice Department alumnus put it.

Came the spring of 1963, and the Administration was in the process of committing itself to a new, controversial, and "strong" civil rights bill. The nation had been moved by the murder of Medgar Evers, the narrowly averted explosion in Birmingham against the background of Bull Connor's water hoses, cattle prods, and police dogs. Martin Luther King had written his powerful "Letter From Birmingham City Jail," and his person incarnated the country's civil rights tensions. That summer he gave his "I have a dream" speech at the March on Washington. That fall a Harris poll was to identify King as the black leader most liked by Negroes (88 percent of those polled voted for him, 95 percent of the black leadership was pro-King). As King gained more and more renown and respect, the FBI increased its flow of

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anti-King memoranda. One recipient recalls, "Mr. Hoover takes the view that the FBI simply reports information to the Department, and they don't evaluate it. The fact was that they broke the rule with respect to Martin Luther King increasingly during the Kennedy years."

Today, rumors circulate that King's Washington hotel suite during the 1963 March on Washington was "bugged." If that is true, it was without the authorization or knowledge of the Attorney General. And if King, indeed, was engaged in extracurricular interracial sex, as black writer John Williams all but confirms in his new book, *The King God Didn't Save*, then one can further understand Mr. Hoover's sense of urgency about him. Mr. Hoover considered interracial sex a form of "moral degeneracy."

On June 22, 1963, Martin Luther King visited successively with Burke Marshall, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and President John Kennedy. In a morning meeting Marshall told him explicitly about O'Dell, about whom King had been "warned" on previous occasions. Later that morning both the Attorney General and the President strongly urged King to sever O'Dell's connection with SCLC. And they warned him about Stanley Levison, although when Dr. King asked what evidence they had against Levison, they wouldn't provide any. I have seen internal Justice Department memoranda stating that "we thought it was not in the best interests of the United States" to divulge the nature of the "evidence" (allegations?) against Levison. King was told—without evidence—that Levison was believed to be a "secret member of the Communist Party." Burke Marshall also warned the Reverend Andy Young of SCLC that since many people believed O'Dell to have Communist connections, his continued association with SCLC "was not in their best interests," regardless of the truth of the allegations.

With the civil rights movement building to a crescendo, with a good civil rights bill in the wings, with King precariously straddling the increasingly militant younger activists identified with SNCC and the establishmentarian civil rights organizations like the NAACP, with his own reputation approaching its apex, and with a nation not yet fully recovered from the depredations of the McCarthy era when Red taint was fatal, Dr. Martin Luther King agreed to heed the warnings of his governmental friends—the President, the Attorney General, Burke Marshall. He said he would suspend O'Dell and break off relations with Levison. "None of us thought King was a Communist," recalls one of Kennedy's close advisers, "but none of us thought the Bureau was wrong on the point they raised."

On July 3, 1963, despite the lack of hard evidence against O'Dell, Dr. King sent this letter to him:

Dear Jack:

Several months ago you submitted your resignation pending an investigation of your alleged affiliation with the Communist Party, as was suggested by

an article to this effect in the Birmingham and New Orleans newspapers. We accepted this temporary resignation because of SCLC's firm policy that no Communist or Communist sympathizer can be on our staff or in our membership. We felt that it was imperative to conduct an immediate investigation. As you know we conducted what we felt to be a thorough inquiry into these charges and were unable to discover any present connections with the Communist Party on your part.

The situation in our country is such, however, that any allusion to the left brings forth an emotional response which would seem to indicate that SCLC and the Southern Freedom Movement are Communist-inspired. In these critical times we cannot afford to risk any such impressions. We therefore, have decided in our Administrative Committee, that we should request you to make your temporary resignation permanent.

We certainly appreciate the years of unselfish service which you have put into our New York office, and regret the necessity of your departure. Certainly, yours is a significant sacrifice commensurate with the sufferings in jail and through loss of jobs under racist intimidation. We all pray for the day when our nation may be truly the land of the free. May God bless you and continue to inspire you in the service of your fellow man.

(signed) Martin Luther King

Levison was a different story. Although King had agreed to break with him, he couldn't believe that his close friend—who had been at his side long before King became the country's leading civil rights figure—would use him in this way. Dr. King had known Mr. Levison since the days of the Montgomery bus boycott when they had been introduced by Bayard Rustin. Indeed, SCLC itself was conceived in the wake of the Montgomery bus boycott, in late night conversations between Rustin, Ella Baker (its first executive director), and Levison, who became a friend in need and deed, managed the SCLC stock portfolio, did free legal work (as did Harry Wachtel, William Kunstler, and others), raised money, planned fund-raising concerts, helped King with his copy-right and other legal problems. After a Montgomery grand jury indicted King on a trumped-up charge of falsifying his Alabama state income tax returns for 1956 and 1958, when a deeply concerned Dr. King felt his credibility would be undermined, Coretta King recalls: "Our trusted friend Stanley Levison answered, 'Martin, it isn't your responsibility to defend yourself. You are in this trouble because of who you are and all you have done for the movement in this country. It is the country's duty to see that you are properly defended.'" When King was stabbed by Mrs. Isola Corry, a black lady, with a Japanese letter opener in Harlem in September of 1958, it was Levison who met Mrs. King at the airport and took her to see the surgeon who had operated to remove the blade. And ten years later, at the time of King's murder, Coretta King recalls, Levison "came to offer assistance. . . . Always working in the back-

ground, his contribution has been indispensable.”

In her memoir, Mrs. King writes that of the thousands of tributes that had been paid to her husband since his death, “the one which best describes the meaning of my husband’s life and death was written by two of his most devoted and trusted friends, Harry Belafonte and Stanley Levison.”

Levison had booked speaking engagements for King, he had worked on drafts of manuscripts and speeches, he had served as consultant, adviser, confidant, and functionary. And so, despite King’s promise to break with Levison, he would call—from time to time—to find out a date or a location or to get some files. And, as Levison himself told me, “You don’t sever a long relationship just like that.” King had informed Levison of the Justice Department’s warnings, and Levison, like O’Dell—despite believed assurances of innocence—agreed, for the good of the movement, to step aside. But as King checked unfinished business, facts, and dates with Levison, they gradually resumed communication until Levison raised the issue with him: “Aren’t we drifting back together? And aren’t we giving the opposition something to muck around with?”

King’s answer, after some deliberation, was: “I have decided I am going to work completely in the open. There’s nothing to hide. And if anybody wants to make something of it let them try.” And so they resumed their relationship as it had always been.

According to the Kennedyites, FBI officials saw that King hadn’t really broken with Levison. The FBI men argued that this confirmed Mr. Hoover’s worst suspicions—that King was either under Communist control or a conscious fellow traveler. “The FBI kept sending memoranda about contacts between the two men, advice that was given and taken, memos that [Levison] had prepared, speeches he wrote that King delivered,” recalls a Kennedy intimate. And so, in the fall of 1963, Robert Kennedy agreed to the FBI request for a tap on Dr. King’s phones (one on his home, one on his Atlanta office, and one on a New York office), and the agreement was finalized in an FBI-prepared request which the Attorney General signed on October 10, 1963, where it said “Approved.” The language was FBI-ese, but the ostensible purpose of the taps on Dr. King’s phones was to see whether King was indeed the target of effective Communist influence. That the FBI had other motives for wanting to tap King’s phones—such as keeping track of the civil rights leader’s strategy for its own purposes—is, of course, a probability, although such considerations were never openly discussed.

One can accept the Kennedy version of what happened and yet reject the Kennedy interpretation, which, as I see it, has five parts.

First, the argument that the FBI instigated the tap, that it was the prime mover. This seems indisput-

able, FBI memoranda to the contrary notwithstanding. Too often internal FBI memos seem to be written less to record present events than to make a record against future ones. Moreover, every Justice Department and FBI alumnus who will talk agrees that without Mr. Hoover’s insistence there would have been no tap. However, since the Attorney General as a matter of law and fact had veto power over all taps, and was the *only* one who could authorize them, he is in no way absolved from responsibility merely because Mr. Hoover thought of it first.

Second, the argument that given the same facts Robert Kennedy was given, any other Attorney General would have made the same determination. As a man who had worked with Kennedy in his days as staff director of the McClellan Committee and later served with him in the Justice Department told me in the spring of 1968 (before Hoover made his allegations): “Kennedy had hard evidence. It’s classified. I can’t describe it, but I can tell you this. If you believe at all that the Soviet Union has agents in the United States—unless you believe it’s all a charade—you had to go along.” Burke Marshall says, “I can’t tell you who the man was or what the allegations were, but I can tell you I think it would not be responsible for an Attorney General—in view of the characterizations of what that man was doing and who he was working for—for the Attorney General to refuse a tap. If you take it as being true that there has been an espionage system and that the Bureau has an obligation to do things about that—if you put all that together, I would say you could say he refused too long.”

Of course, when Ramsey Clark became Attorney General he had the authority and, as he has told us, he denied repeated FBI requests—the last one came two days before Dr. King’s murder—for authorization to tap and/or bug Dr. King. Since Levison did not disappear from the scene we must assume that Clark, who approved other FBI “national security” wiretap requests on a selective basis, for one, would have been an exception to the rule which the Kennedy loyalists state with such certitude.

Then, too, it is important to distinguish the *allegations* against Levison from the *evidence* for the allegations against Levison.

Since we don’t know precisely what these allegations were, it is difficult to make a judgment here. Nevertheless, having interviewed Levison and talked with countless members of the civil rights movement and the Justice Department, I have made one: I believe Stanley Levison when he says, “I can tell you I’m not a member of the Communist Party and I never was.” Levison believes his troubles stem from perjurious testimony about him by a vindictive former associate trying to clear *himself* of subversive-activity charges. I don’t know whether this is the case, I don’t know what Levison did or was technically accused of doing. He is said to have been called before the Senate Internal Security Committee,

where he testified in executive session. When I asked him about it he told me that although he had nothing to hide, he was reluctant to rehash misleading charges which could only end up in unfairly smearing Dr. King's reputation. I do know he has never been indicted under the espionage laws, he has never been indicted for failing to register as a member of the Communist Party or as an enemy agent, he has never been the subject of the sort of FBI leaks which got Jack O'Dell's name into the Southern papers even before he was suspended.

Thus, however grave the allegations, one tends to doubt the "evidence" for them in the absence of further proof. Moreover, if the FBI had evidence against Levison (and if Kennedy examined it prior to authorizing the tap) then the Attorney General was subsequently derelict in not insisting on examining—perhaps on a daily, or at least a weekly, basis—the FBI logs on King's phones. Yet there is no record that the Attorney General *ever asked to look at*, no less saw, the actual logs. Instead, business continued as usual. "We would receive scraps of information about King's travel plans or whatever," recalls Burke Marshall, "but you'd never know where they came from. The FBI would always identify its 'informants' only by number and letter."

As a Kennedy aide points out, "As far as I knew during the time it was on there was no evidence that supported the notion—the allegation or accusation—that Martin King was a secret Marxist or a profligate. And no evidence came out that the attorney involved had any sinister influence on King."

Third, the argument that, actually, the purpose of the tap was as much to protect Dr. King from false FBI charges (by proving his innocence) as anything else. Katzenbach told me in late 1968, as he was preparing to leave his job as Undersecretary of State (to which Johnson "promoted" him from his Attorney Generalship after he too had run afoul of Mr. Hoover): "There was some reason to believe that known subversives were making efforts to influence Dr. King's movement, and the question was how to deal with that, how to confirm whether they were or not, and under these circumstances, really as much for the protection of Dr. King as for any other reason, and not because of any suspicion or feeling that Dr. King himself was in any way subversive or disloyal, Mr. Kennedy authorized a tap." I am sure that Kennedy and the men around him convinced themselves that the tap on Dr. King was for his own good—although in retrospect it strains credulity (and is unforgivably patronizing) to suggest that it is permissible to invade the privacy of the spiritual leader of the civil rights revolution to protect him against himself. And it goes against everything Kennedy and Marshall and Katzenbach knew through personal experience with the obstinate, messianic, idealistic Dr. King to think that such a man could be persuaded over the telephone to do something he didn't want to do, something that was against

his better instincts, no less sell out the civil rights cause and/or undermine the national security. He was, after all, the man who had resisted the pressures of the head of the Civil Rights Division, the Attorney General, and the President himself to postpone civil rights demonstrations in Albany, Birmingham, and Washington, D. C., among other places, when he thought they were right. He had chosen jail over bail, risked his life, hunger-struck, sat-in, marched, argued and listened and defied as a way of life. When I asked Burke Marshall if he had grounds for believing King so easily persuadable or so easily deceived, he said that he didn't, although he also said that if he had been Attorney General, he too would have authorized the tap.

One old hand at Justice has pointed out in addition: "If you really want to find out about A's attempt to influence B, you tap A, not B. That's the difference between 10 percent and 90 percent." There is no evidence that Levison's phone was tapped and some evidence to suggest that it wasn't, a peculiarity. Andy Young of SCLC once observed: "All life is a recording studio for us," and on the basis of that assumption all of the people around SCLC decided that since they were not a conspiracy, and since they had nothing to hide, and since they had little practical alternative, they would speak freely over the telephones. Nevertheless, the fact was that if *protection* was the real aim, the Justice Department achieved that goal when they alerted Dr. King to the possibility that someone was out to subvert him. If they were suspicious of Dr. King, had something on him, or wanted to get something, then the tap would be more plausible. But if they really believed—as they are unanimous in affirming they did—that Dr. King himself was above suspicion, then a tap on *him* was redundant.

Fourth, and the most common argument put forth by Kennedy loyalists *after* Hoover got out the official FBI version (although it hadn't been mentioned to me before), was that the *real* reason Kennedy went along was that the civil rights bill hung in the balance, that Southerners in Congress would stop at nothing to defeat it, that its passage was critical to the nation, not to mention the re-election of JFK. "We didn't think King was influenceable," says one aide, "but the problem is you can be wrong. How do you pit your judgment against the Bureau's?" Already, the FBI or somebody had leaked insubstantial information about Jack O'Dell, and Hoover was never particularly reticent about these matters. On January 24, 1962, he had told the Appropriations subcommittee of the House:

Since its inception the CPUSA has been alert to capitalize on every possible issue or event which could be used to exploit the American Negro in furtherance of Party aims. In its effort to influence the American Negro, the Party attempts to infiltrate the legitimate Negro organizations for the purpose of stirring up racial prejudice and hatred . . .

And in the summer of 1963, a number of senators got word of the rumor and made official inquiry of the Justice Department. Some, like Senator Mike Monroney (Dem., Oklahoma), were told informally about Levison. Others, like Senator Strom Thurmond (Rep., South Carolina), who would stop at nothing to defeat the incipient civil rights legislation, asked, and the Attorney General answered as follows:

Dear Senator:

This is in response to your inquiry of the FBI concerning the charges made in the hearings on S. 1732 that the racial problems in this country, particularly in the South, were created or are being exploited by the Communist Party.

Based on all available information from the FBI and other sources, we have no evidence that any of the top leaders of the major civil rights groups are Communists or Communist controlled. This is true as to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to whom particular accusations were made, as well as other leaders.

It is natural and inevitable that Communists have made efforts to infiltrate the civil rights groups and to exploit the current racial situation. In view of the real injustices that exist and the resentment against them, these efforts have been remarkably unsuccessful.

While there is a certain plausibility and appealing simplicity to a *post hoc* explanation which portrays the tap on Dr. King as a kind of electronic insurance policy taken out on behalf of his civil rights program (with the nation's blacks as the beneficiaries), the fact is, of course, that it is unconstitutional, illegal, and outrageously improper, not to mention an egregiously dangerous precedent, to tap a man's telephone, any man's, to help the passage of legislation, no matter how desirable that legislation may appear at the time.

Finally, there is the argument, a sort of afterthought in most serious discussions of the matter by Justice Department alumni: Why did he agree to tap King's phone? "Because there would have been no living with the Bureau if he didn't." My own conclusion is that this afterthought is the *real* explanation of why Robert Kennedy went along—an explanation invisible to those too involved in the FBI environment to see what was happening to them.

The passage of the civil rights bill, the re-election of JFK, the national security, the desire to protect their friend, had little to do with it. Robert Kennedy authorized the tap on Martin King's phone to avoid problems with the FBI. Not merely the present problems of "living with the Bureau," having to face non-cooperation (in the guise of procedural regularity) in unrelated areas, risking an FBI torpedo aimed at the civil rights bill, inviting harassment from congressmen, columnists, and other legions of constituents who respond to Mr. Hoover's distress signals. Robert

Kennedy's calculations had to project a future where, let us suppose in an improbable hypothetical, it was revealed that Dr. King had indeed been the target of an effective Communist conspiracy. It takes no leap of the imagination to project how Mr. Hoover might have used this fact to embarrass the Kennedy Administration (if not at the time, then perhaps later).

The model was at hand in Mr. Hoover's handling of the Harry Dexter White case. During Harry Truman's presidency, White, a high-ranking Treasury Department official, had been named as a member of a Soviet spy ring. Because the evidence against White was inconclusive, President Truman chose to keep him under surveillance rather than arrest him. According to HST this decision was taken with the FBI's approval. But with Truman and the Democrats out and the Communists-in-government issue in, Mr. Hoover waited nine months and then on November 17, 1953, on congressional invitation, he flatly denied that he had agreed to keep White in government, and thereby directly contradicted former President Truman. As authorized FBI biographer Don Whitehead points out, "Hoover spoke with a finality about his conversations . . . because after each discussion he had dictated a memorandum to his files."

Robert Kennedy's enemies while he was alive and his critics after he died have tried to use the King wiretap as evidence that the Attorney General was cynical, ruthless, and hypocritical, embracing Dr. King in public, wiretapping him in private; listening in on Dr. King's bedroom at night in order to use it against him in the morning. In fact, it is evidence of something quite different—the distribution of power between the Director, who resented the uppity nigger whom he blamed for many of the country's and the FBI's problems down South; and the General, who trusted Dr. King to the point of privately alerting him to the FBI's worst suspicions.

The Director was permanent, the General was temporary. The General—when he cared enough to interrupt the FBI's rigid routines—could influence the present, but the Director had a lien on the future. Especially when it came to reputations—reputations of individuals and, by extension, reputations of whole Administrations.

A leaked file, a damaging rumor can, of course, ruin a career. When an Attorney General leaves office, his private files go with him, his official ones go to the archives; but the FBI files—drenched in "raw, unevaluated data"—remain. And so the Director—with the FBI files as his private library—is *de facto* caretaker to the nation's reputations.

This is not to suggest that an Attorney General with different predispositions might not have acted differently. Robert Kennedy did not share Mr. Hoover's assumption that Dr. King was a subversive (or subject to subversive control) or his alarmist attitude toward the CPUSA; but he did accept the cold-war hypothesis of a world split in ideological halves, which put him in a weak position to challenge

the FBI assumption that every member of the Communist Party (or alleged member) was a potential if not a probable enemy agent whose phone was tapable at the stroke of the Attorney General's pen.

Robert Kennedy was increasingly sensitive to the invasion-of-privacy issue, and his second (1962) wiretap bill had more civil liberties safeguards than his first; but wiretapping per se did not shock his conscience, and although he gave serious attention to proposed legislation, he was casual to the point of carelessness about existing departmental practices. The fact was that he exercised no control over taps after he signed his approval of them. He had no procedure for reviewing a tap's relevance or efficacy once approved. He didn't even keep a log of who was being tapped when. And he didn't institute any of the reforms proposed in his much-ballyhooed wiretapping bill, even though many of them could have been put into effect on his own initiative.

It was characteristic rather than surprising that he never asked to examine the transcripts of the King tap (as he never saw the transcripts of any other tap). "We received scraps of information about his travel plans, his speaking engagements," recalls one Kennedy colleague, "but we never saw anything like the transcript of a conversation. And of course we were never told where the FBI got its information. That's not the way they did things." It never occurred to Robert Kennedy to ask that the tap be re-justified or turned off. (Nor, it might be added, did it occur to any of those who ran the Department in Robert Kennedy's emotional absence after his brother's assassination, which came just forty-two days after the tap had been approved.) And so it stayed on through the remainder of his Attorney Generalship, including *after* the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 was passed, by which time he was moving beyond the shadow of his brother's murder.

Finally, there was the fact that if Kennedy and his top-level associates were insufficiently sensitive to the dangers, the improprieties, the potential for abuse and erosion of original purpose, the unwisdom of tapping, they were not insensitive to the public relations disaster they would suffer if word got out that King's phone was tapped—which goes back to the main reason the tap was approved in the first place: the greater disaster to the Kennedy Administration's reputation if they failed to tap and Mr. Hoover, at some distant date, used it against them. Mr. Hoover's tactic may have been to threaten historical reputations. Attorney General Kennedy's habit was to protect the particular reputation of his brother's Administration.

After Robert Kennedy resigned, in November of 1964, the Director—unable to contain his rage at this celebrated black man who had just won the Nobel Prize, an honor which had eluded Mr. Hoover despite his years of service on behalf of public tranquillity—exploded at a rare press briefing, and twice in the course of a three-hour meeting with a select group of women reporters, he called Dr. King "the

most notorious liar in the country." Later he told Katzenbach, "I don't know what everybody got so upset about. All I said was God's honest truth." He was ostensibly referring to Dr. King's suggestion that civil rights workers in Albany, Georgia, not bother reporting rights violations to the FBI because its agents were Southern-born and/or Southern-biased. But in fact, Mr. Hoover bolstered his blanket charge with private circulation (to selected newsmen and congressmen) of the bugging transcripts already discussed, which allegedly portrayed Dr. King as "a moral degenerate."

The Bureau, we have learned from documents released in connection with the flap over organized-crime bugs, took the position that they didn't need specific authorization to bug because they had a general authorization dating back to 1954 and, as one sardonic Kennedyite put it, "All subsequent Attorneys General would have known about this memorandum if only they took the trouble to read the five hundred pounds of paper which the FBI forwarded over the years, properly."

So now it is generally conceded that during at least some of Bob Kennedy's Attorney Generalship, the FBI—*unknown* to the General—was bugging Dr. King as well as tapping him. "When I was in government I couldn't have believed what they did," says one who lost his innocence, "but I believe it now." And when the "evidence" of the bugs comes out—when a "transcript" is actually published (or leaked)—there will be a new flap. And again Mr. Hoover will claim he had authority and believe he is telling "God's honest truth" (since he possesses a memorandum written in 1954 which *he* interprets to have given him such authority). And the Kennedyites will rally round the standard and correctly deny that he had any such authority or that Bob Kennedy or anybody else outside the Bureau knew anything about it. The public will be more confused than ever, and what will be lost in the charges and rebuttals and counter-rebuttals are the real lessons of the tapping of Dr. Martin King's telephone:

That you can't ever protect a man's reputation by invading his privacy; that no matter how noble the aim (passage of the civil rights bill included), wiretapping has a way of eroding original purpose, especially when conducted by an agency like the FBI, which has a vested interest in the accumulation of secret information; that the underlying relationship of the FBI to passing Administrations—at least in the internal security area—is in part the relationship of blackmailer to blackmailee; that the cold war has tainted the policy-making process in ways invisible to the public and the press; that the fact that in the vast majority of cases the Director has not chosen to exploit his advantage is testimony to his wisdom and our luck, not to the health of the system; that the costs of involving a secret society like the FBI in the fight for an open one—an achievement widely hailed at the time—have yet to be computed. □

A FASHIONABLE KIND OF SLANDER

by Robert Coles, M.D.

It may seem strange now, six or eight years later, but in respected and moderate circles of the South, and the rest of the nation, the Southern Freedom Riders and the Mississippi Project volunteers of 1964 were thought to be (were declared) wild, impetuous, thoughtless, self-destructive, and masochistic; and the plan to challenge the state of Mississippi was considered a crazy and romantic scheme, doomed from the start and potentially dangerous, or even ruinous, because of the response that powerful men like James Eastland and John Stennis and their allies would no doubt make.

I would like to single out three of the expressions I just used: *masochistic*, *crazy*, and *self-destructive*. For years in the South I heard those words directed at civil rights workers, and when I went to Appalachia to work with the Appalachian Volunteers, a similar group of dedicated, youthful political activists, I again heard the same thing. The line goes as follows: What's the matter with them? What kind of people do things like that? Why do they do such things? Do they really think anything will come of antics like theirs, rash and impulsive assaults? They are mistaken if they believe a small minority like them can prevail against the powers-that-be. Maybe they want to lose, though.

Maybe they are stubbornly, uncompromisingly bent on the kind of confrontation that can lead only to violence, disorder—and a kind of retaliation that will not only put an end to their protest but set things even further back, create an even worse climate of fear and repression. In short, maybe those youths are irrational, deluded by a host of absurd and dangerous fantasies, violence-prone, and in some serious way, anti-social.

"SICK"

In 1963 I discovered how that kind of approach to activist, dissenting youths works. I heard a decidedly sensitive and well-educated Southern judge send a youthful black civil rights worker to a state hospital, where he was to be "observed," where his "mental status" was to be evaluated, where possible "delinquent" and "sociopathic" trends would be ascertained and studied—and where, perhaps, the young man would begin to get some "treatment." If he received no treatment the youth did have a chance to think, and what I heard from him was for me a professional confrontation of sorts, something I have never been able to forget, especially because I had worked with

delinquent youth in the course of my training in child psychiatry: "It's quite a setup they've got. We protest our inability to vote, to go into a movie or restaurant everyone else uses, and they call us crazy, and send us away to be looked over by psychiatrists and psychologists and social workers and all the rest of them. The questions I've had put at me since I've been here! Were you a *loner* when you were a boy? Did people consider you *rebellious*? Were you *popular* or *unpopular* as a child? When you were younger did you have trouble *taking orders* from your parents or your teachers? Did your mother *discipline* you firmly, or did she more or less let you do as you please? And on and on they go, one question after another, and none of them very subtle.

"The guy doing the questioning told me he is a doctor, a psychiatrist, and I asked him why he wasn't interested in *what* I've done, and the *objective reasons* I've acted as I have. But he said he knew 'all that.' He told me his job is to examine my mind and find out what my 'motivations' are. He kept on asking me whether I feel angry at this person and that one, and if I have a temper, and how do I 'handle tension,' and he wanted to know whether people in 'authority' make me anxious, and whether I have trouble in 'controlling'

myself, and whether I 'rush out and act' when I come upon an unpleasant situation, or instead do I stop and think and try to figure out the best possible 'attitude' to have. I wrote them down, as many of his words and questions as I could, because the way he put those questions was to me more abusive than anything I've ever heard from the poor, ignorant red-necks. At least they have the decency to insult you right to your face; so you know exactly where they stand and no one's fooling anyone, least of all himself. That doctor (I can tell from talking with him over a week) considers himself way above the red-neck; in his mind he is a careful, thoughtful, temperate man. He used that word 'temperate' two or three times with me. He kept on contrasting 'temperate behavior' with 'impulsive behavior,' and after we got talking more casually he told me that some people have a 'need'—that's right, a *need*—to disrupt the lives of others, and hurt them, and get hurt themselves. Did I think I was that kind of person?

"Soon you just slip into the whole scene. I mean, you stop noticing all the assumptions a guy like that constantly makes, and you simply try to answer him as best you can. And anyway, if you protest and tell him off, tell him what you think is implicit in his questions and his whole way of thinking, he's not going to take your argument seriously; he's going to go after *you*—and call you 'hostile' and 'defensive' and full of 'problems' and all the rest. He as much as told me so, that doctor did. He said a lot was going on inside my mind, and until I found out what 'really' was prompting some of my 'behavior,' I'd probably continue what I've been doing. He told me he was going to recommend to the court that I not be sent to jail. He said I needed treatment—but he was worried that I would be 'resistant' to it, and that would be 'too bad' for me, and later I would be sorry."

The youth then pointed out to me what I hope is obvious: the smug,

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self-righteous arrogance he had met up with, the pejorative use of psychiatric terminology, the limitless display of self-satisfaction and condescension, the essentially illogical and totalitarian nature of a mode of thought that claims to have the authority to decide who has a right even to discuss certain matters, and who (whatever he *thinks* he is saying or doing or trying to say or trying to do) is *really* "sick" or "resistant" or seriously in need of "help," and therefore thoroughly, hopelessly suspect. I was prepared to accept much of that from him—I had heard patients endlessly labeled in ways that robbed them of their dignity, and I had seen in myself as a psychiatric resident the awful tendency to dismiss a patient's disagreement or criticism as evidence of just about anything but his or her good judgment. But I was not so prepared to see how convenient it could be for that judge, and many like him, to have people around who would summon all the authority of medicine and science to the task of defending the status quo—which meant putting firmly in their place (a hospital or a clinic) those who choose to wage a struggle against that status quo.

"PARANOID"

Only over time did I begin to realize, often because I was brought up short by some very bright and clearheaded youths, that all sorts of phrases and concepts bandied about rather freely by me and my kind reveal as much about us as about those we describe. What indeed is "mental health"? Who indeed is "normal"? Were slave-holders "normal"? Did Nat Turner have a "problem with authority"? If a man tells me he is going to kill himself, I call him "suicidal" and want to hospitalize him. If a man in Vietnam runs into a burst of machine-gun fire, urging his comrades to do likewise, I call him a hero. If a man wants to kill someone, he is homicidal and needs confinement. If a man drops a bomb on people he doesn't even see or know, he is doing his duty. And if a man is *afraid* he might want to kill someone, he, of course, needs help or guidance or treatment to prevent a fear from becoming a deed; whereas if a pilot should become horrified at the

thought of what *he* might do, the bombs he might cause to fall on fellow human beings, he would need that same "treatment"—presumably so that he will get over his hesitations and "do his duty." Certainly if he starts making a lot of noise about his fears and his misgivings he will be sent for "evaluation." And, of course, if the pilot never once has such hesitations and qualms, he is "normal" or "patriotic" or a "good soldier" or whatever.

Such ironies and vexing discrepancies ought to make us all at the very least aware that psychiatric judgments about what is or is not "appropriate" are not rendered in some scientific vacuum, but are made at a particular moment of history and in a given society by men who are distinctly part of that society—namely, its upper middle class.

The Southern youth who was just quoted knew in his bones what it takes some of us longer to realize, if indeed we ever do, no matter how thoroughly we analyze ourselves—that the assumptions we make about a person's social and political behavior have to do with the kinds of lives we ourselves live, and that the doctor in that mental hospital was nothing less than a willing and indeed eager representative of a particular kind of entrenched power, which wanted those protesting its authority discredited and knocked out of commission, one way or another. In the distant past, but also in recent times, dissenters have been banished to prison or sent to their death (or sent to America!) for their noisy, unorthodox, unsettling, and provocative words and acts. Many of us no doubt find such out-and-out repression distasteful, but we are not beyond our own ability to call a person we oppose *only* thinly disguised names, to insult him and at the same time ignore the thrust of his declared purposes, his stated intentions, his deeds—which surely ought to be open for discussion on their own merits, rather than the merits of one or another person's psychiatric status. We dismiss, belittle, and run down those we disagree with *substantively* by doing them in *personally*.

For example, in response to a questionnaire put out by a magazine, a substantial number of American psychiatrists were willing just a few

years ago to signify that yes, Barry Goldwater is not "psychologically fit" to be President of the United States. Later, we heard that George Wallace might also be "neurotic" and "unstable." I happen to feel, as a citizen, that I would prefer to have as my friend Barry Goldwater rather than Lyndon Johnson, that in fact Mr. Goldwater is more open as a person, less self-centered, and less given to pettiness or meanness—but I voted for Mr. Johnson because in 1964 his position on all sorts of issues seemed far wiser to me than Mr. Goldwater's. In 1964, to a supporter of Lyndon Johnson, his moodiness, his arrogance, his secretiveness were the foibles of a great, warmhearted humanitarian, just as to Richard Nixon's supporters today, his aloofness, his outbursts of anger when things have not gone as he likes are the way he chooses to deal with a difficult job, or the way he responds to outrageous provocations. Put differently, psychological evaluations inevitably are influenced by our disposition to like or dislike a person or his views; and that holds for psychiatrists, too—who can misuse their own professional language and applaud or condemn deeds or individuals with words like "ego-syntonic" (which means "good") and "pre-oedipal" (which means "bad").

Then there are today's students and demonstrators. What we don't hear about them! They are "products of permissive child-rearing practices." They are sons of self-made men who abhor the materialism of their fathers, and more than that, are struggling with some version of an "oedipal conflict." They are "immature." They have "poor ego controls." They are not in touch with "reality." They are "passive-aggressive." They are "exhibitionistic" or plagued by "omnipotent fantasies." They are "acting out" one or another "problem." Their words and thoughts and actions show them "paranoid," even in some cases "psychotic." Nor are those whose serious and carefully thought out ideas happen to capture the interest of the young immune from that kind of comment. The distinguished British psychoanalyst R.D. Laing, whose many books and papers require patient study, whose ideas are bold and challenging and singularly free of the banal and the pompous, is called a host of psychiatric names and ignored

in all too many centers of psychiatric and psychoanalytic training. The well-known American psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, whose books constantly demand from his colleagues a willingness to look at the way unconventional people are commonly enough labeled "mentally ill" and locked up permanently, is himself called "paranoid" or possessed of a "one-track mind" or an "obsession"—as if men like Pasteur or Freud were not grandly preoccupied and maybe even "obsessed."

Needless to say, there are no limits to the abuses that can be perpetrated in the name of any ideological system. In the Soviet Union social critics and writers and scientists are regularly carted off to psychiatric hospitals, where they are called various high-sounding names and kept locked up. Here things are by no means as blatant and absurd, but with shrill rhetoric becoming almost our daily fare, it is hard to imagine any line of argument as off-limits today. And if young people or political activists are to be condemned for their "personality problems" rather than listened to (and thoroughly applauded or severely criticized) for the substance of what they propose or advocate, then surely we ought to turn the tables and ask some questions about other people—in order to end once and for all a silly and insulting way of dealing with issues.

"PROBLEMS"

What are we to say, for instance, about the "early childhood" or "mental state" of political leaders or business leaders or labor leaders who lie or cheat or order thousands to go off to fight and kill? What kind of "psychological conflict" enables a man to be an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, or a pilot who drops napalm bombs, or a congressman who wants to use atomic and hydrogen bombs so that a nation will be "turned into a parking lot"? What kind of "oedipal conflict" enables so many people to demonstrate their obvious lack of real concern for millions of poor Americans—out of work, ailing, hungry? Do we ask about the psychological "factors" that enable a man to be hard-driving, competitive, on the rise, always on the rise,

often over the backs of everyone else around? Do we question the "unconscious reasons" so many of us "adjust" to the injustice around us, become indifferent, become caught up in what is called a "rat race" or a "grind" even by those utterly uninterested in social change or protest? Moreover, if students are out to kill their "parent surrogates," what indeed about our desire as grown-ups to squelch the young, subtly and not so subtly degrade them, be rid of them—because they inspire envy in us; because they confront us with all the chances we forsook, all the opportunities we have lost, all the tricks and evasions and compromises and duplicities we have long since *rationalized* or *repressed* or *projected*?

So it goes, and so do we all suffer, I believe. Step by step we become the victims of various kinds of slander and invective, some obvious, some indirect and clothed in pietistic, sanctimonious language or in the jargon of the social sciences or psychiatry. Words like "fascist" and "elitist" are hurled indiscriminately and viciously at anyone and everyone, and of course "Communists" crop up everywhere in the minds of some. And if those more political modes of assault don't work, the rest of us, more "moderate" and maybe just as desperate and confused, can always dispense with a bothersome individual or political question by raising our eyebrows and calling into question a person's "psychodynamics" or damning an entire group with some psychological or sociological generalization. Why bother, after all, to remind ourselves that every single human being has "problems," struggles with love and hate and envy and fear and all the rest? Why bother to ask *whose* "law" and *whose* "order" are being assaulted, and for what *purpose*? Why bother asking ourselves what *in fact* so many youths, from so many different backgrounds and regions, are actually saying and asking of us? And finally, why trouble ourselves by asking how it has come about that we have lost faith in our ethical convictions, and so have to attack or defend people and entire political movements by resorting to words and concepts originally meant only to help doctors clarify for themselves the sorrow and pain felt by particular patients? □

A LOT OF COWBOYS

A Story by Judith Rascoe

When it began to snow all the cowboys came into town and rented motel rooms with free TV. One of the cowboys said his favorite program was *Bonanza*. "It's pretty authentic."

"Aw, shit, what do you know about authentic?"

"Well, I know. I'm a cowboy, ain't I?"

"Well, so am I, and I think *Bonanza* is a bunch of bull-pucky. Now if you want authentic stuff you ought to watch *Gunsmoke*."

"Well, you old cuss, I will show you what's authentic." So the cowboy hit the other cowboy with his fist.

"No fighting in here, so you cut that out," said the motel manager.

"You're right," the cowboys said. They got some ice and some White Horse and some Coca-Cola. The motel manager said to his wife, "By God, you can't tell them dumb cowhands nothing. They mix good scotch with Coca-Cola."

"I knew I never wanted to marry a cowboy," his wife said. "I knew *all* about them. They weren't the fellows for me." She was keeping her eye on a young couple who weren't married; the girl seemed to have made a wedding ring out of a gold cellophane strip from a cigarette package. Looked mean; good thing the poor fellow hadn't married her yet. That night in the bar the motel manager's wife told him he shouldn't marry her.

"Huh?" he inquired.

* * *

A number of cowboys went to see the Ford dealer. He turned on the

lights in his office and brought out two fifths of bourbon. The cars stood around the showroom like cows around a campfire, reflecting little gleams from the office and little gleams from the street. You could almost hear them sighing.

"Goddamn, that Maverick is a pretty little car," a cowboy said.

"Yeah, yeah," another cowboy said. "But I tell you, I got my eye on a pickup so pretty you'd like to cry. Dark-green gold-flecked. Air conditioning. And I'd hang toolboxes on the side. And maybe—"

He had their attention.

"—and maybe I do and maybe I don't know a Mexican fellow who wants to make me hand-tooled leather seat covers."

"Aaaaooooow-ha. Wooooooooww-EEEE."

Also little tsk-tsk-tsk noises. Head shakes. Lip bites. Breaths indrawn.

"Pwuh," said the Ford dealer. He was a classicist. He couldn't stand to think of a hand-tooled Mexican leather seat cover. Of course he was a town fellow.

"When I was in the Army," one of the cowboys said illustratively, "I got me a tailor over in Munich, and I went in and I said—well, I drew him what I wanted, and he made me a suit, *bitte schon!* Mama, oh that were a suit! It had six slantpockets in the jacket. Course, uh, course, I don't wear it too often, you understand."

Oh, yes, they understood!

There were those cowboys laughing like they were fit to be tied.

An old woman living above the Western Auto store stuck her head out the window and listened to the

cowboys come and go. The snow was falling slowly, and down the street Stan Melchek was sitting in his car waiting for a speeder. A pair of lights appeared in the distance but it was a big tractor-trailer rig, after all, pulling slowly through town, and its taillights went past the All Nite Truck Café, and the old woman pulled her head back inside and closed the window.

* * *

One cowboy lay on one twin bed and another cowboy lay on the other. One cowboy said, "I like Tammy Wynette. I sure get a kick out of her. My favorite record is 'Stand By Your Man.' My little sister sings it just like her. You close your eyes and you don't know it ain't Tammy Wynette singing. She wants me to get a guitar and learn to play and accompany her."

"I wrote a song once," the other cowboy said. "I showed it to this fellow works in Denver, and he said maybe I could publish it and maybe I couldn't."

"Oh, there's money there," the first cowboy said.

"Oh, you better believe it."

"What's on now?"

"*Hawaii Five-O.*"

"Shee-it."

"Well?"

"We sure as hell ain't going to no drive-in tonight."

* * *

We had all these cowboys in town because of the snow, and they were mostly drinking whiskey and watch-

ing television and talking about cars. It was Saturday night, but you sure couldn't tell it from any other night because of the snow. The Basque Hall advertised a dance, but the group they were going to have didn't have chains or something and anyway called from Salt Lake and said nothing doing, so there wasn't even a dance. Some of the older fellows went to the motel bar and danced, but it was mostly Guy Lombardo, which the bartender's wife favored. Maud, the motel manager's wife, had different ideas; she sat down next to a cowboy she knew and said, "We need to light a fire under some of these old cayuses. Play some of the music the kids like."

"I don't like it," the cowboy said.

"Well, hell, no, *you* don't like it, an old fart like you. Hell, you can't dance that way with one foot in the grave."

"Now, cut it out."

"I'll wash out my mouth, Carl."

"I don't like to hear you talk like that, Maud." His eyes filled with tears. "Honest to Christ, Maud, you was the most beautiful girl I ever saw. You wore your hair the sweetest little way with two little curls in front of your ears, and you wore a green silk dress. You were the sweetest little thing."

"Now, don't start crying here."

"Well, God help me, I can't help it."

"You'll just make me cry too." She had handkerchiefs for both of them. She got another round of drinks. That mean little thing with the cellophane wedding ring was looking, and Maud bet *she'd* never known a real man like Carl. These cowboys were always getting drunk and bawling, and it made her bawl too, to tell the truth.

* * *

So, you see, everybody was either in a motel room or in the motel bar, and it was snowing pretty heavily, and then George Byron Cutler drove into town. He was something of a celebrity because his picture was up in post offices, and he was known as G. Byron Cutler and Byron George

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Cutler and G.B. Cutler, to give only a few of his aliases. He was wanted mostly for mail fraud, but he had also held up a post office and was armed, and considered himself dangerous. He usually wore khaki shirts and trousers, but he wore good boots. Most criminals have a peculiarity like that. Anyhow, George Byron Cutler went to the motel and asked for a room, and then stuck his head in the bar and yelled, "Where's the action?"

"Well, now, I thought you was bringing it," somebody yelled back.

"Well, I was, but she didn't have a friend."

"Well, bring her in."

It kind of fell flat. He winked at Maud.

"Is my old man at the desk?" she yelled.

"Yeah, your old man is at the desk," said a voice behind George Byron Cutler. And so Cutler went on to his room, and about an hour later two sheriff's men came by and said they were looking for him.

"Christ almighty! I got to tell Maud," her husband said. "Don't you do nothing 'til I tell Maud. She won't forgive me if we got a bandido in the motel and she's not here."

"You done us a favor," the sheriff's men said, agreeable. They accepted a Coke apiece. They left snow on the Astroturf. "That's Astroturf," Maud's husband said.

"Godalmighty," the sheriff's men said.

So Maud's husband went in to get Maud, and she said real loud, "You mean we got a criminal in this here motel? Oh, I don't know why this hasn't happened before. We are the only motel for fifty miles. The only motel you'd stop at, that's to say. Of course there's always Mrs. Oldon's place. You boys don't stop there, you hear?" A lot of coarse laughter greeted this remark, because the cowboys knew that Mrs. Oldon had a prostitute come through in the summer. Every summer she had a different prostitute, and these girls were known as Winnemucca Discards. It was a common joke that only sheepherders went to Mrs. Oldon. "I am feeling like a shepherd tonight," a cowboy would say, and the reply to that was, "I'd get a sheep instead."

"What sort of a criminal is this fellow?" Maud asked.

"He's a mail fraud," her husband said.

"Sounds like a pansy to me," a cowboy said.

"I want to see the police capture him anyways," Maud said. She rose to her feet, showing a lot of bosom to the assembled, and led the way to the motel lobby, and all the cowboys and even the mean girl with the cellophane wedding ring and her "husband" followed. The sheriff's men were feeling the Astroturf.

"Snowing like all hell," one of the sheriff's men said.

"Is this fellow dangerous?" Maud said.

"Well he is armed and considered dangerous," one of the patrolmen said.

"He's in 211," her husband said.

"Then everybody can see," Maud said. They all looked outside and saw the two layers of rooms, and 211 was pretty well located, being close to the big light and close to the middle of the balcony. The sheriff's men told everybody their names and shook some hands and then went out while everybody watched from the lobby. They went up to 211, and you could see them knock at the door. They didn't even have their guns out.

"He can't be very dangerous if they don't even take out their guns," Maud said.

"It's a Supreme Court rule now," somebody said.

"I don't know how they catch anybody."

Then there was an awful sound like a board breaking and nobody knew what it was at first and then one of the sheriff's men started yelling and all the cowboys and everybody else started yelling, "He's been shot! Jesus Christ, he shot him! Oh, get out of the way." The other sheriff's man started running, and then 211 opened the door and George Byron Cutler stood there with a gun in his hand.

He was shouting something but nobody heard it. Finally a cowboy lying on the Astroturf slid open the double glass door and yelled back, "What did you say?"

"I said I just want to get out of

here," yelled George Byron Cutler. "I have killed a man, and I have nothing to lose now."

"Did you hear what he said?" Maud asked somebody. "I would never have featured it."

"Where is that other sheriff's man? Did he shoot him too?"

It turned out the other sheriff's man was back in his car calling for help. And all the cowboys in the motel rooms were calling to find out what was going wrong. Maud got on the switchboard and told everybody, "Don't peek out. God almighty, don't peek out. Just keep your door locked and lie low. He has a gun, and he has killed a police officer."

George Byron Cutler walked toward the lobby with his gun shaking. All the cowboys and women were on top of each other on the floor or crawling away, and a lot of people were crying. Maud said to the switchboard, "Dear Lord, he is coming in here. I got to hang up now. Do not come here. You cannot help us."

Then George Byron Cutler tried to open the lobby door, but it was cold

and stuck. He began making faces and pounding at it. "Wait wait wait wait." A cowboy got up real slow and opened the door for him.

"Just stay as you are," Cutler said to everybody. "Give me your money."

"I'll give it to you," Maud said. "But I haven't got much cash."

He thought a long time. Then he told everybody to throw down their credit cards. He took the whole pile of credit cards and put them in his shirt and said, "This will take some time to work out, boys."

Later Maud said she'd thought at first he was scared but he surely showed he was a cool customer.

Then he went out again and they heard a car start and make lots of noise and roar away, and then they heard some more shots, and finally somebody went out and found the cowboys from the Ford dealer's place all standing around the street where George Byron Cutler was lying dead, shot by Stan Melchek.

"I thought at first he was a speeder, but when I stopped him he fired his gun at me."

"I guess you didn't tell him his rights," one of the cowboys said.

"Oh, shut your mouth," another cowboy said. "This fellow has been killed."

Nobody could sleep after that. Maud opened the coffee shop and heated up some bear claws. She sat down with Carl and a couple of the younger fellows.

"Stan Melchek is a cowboy," she said. "He is a cowboy by nature. Those fellows shoot first and ask questions later. That's the code of the West. These big-city criminals don't realize they're out in the Wild West. Out on the frontier here."

"They don't realize," Carl said.

In a very sad voice Maud said, "Well, I guess he learned."

"You don't fool around with a cowboy. You don't fool around in this country," Carl said.

"The cowboy is a vanishing race," one of the cowboys said.

"But he's not finished yet," Maud said.

"Not by a long shot," said one of the cowboys. □

MAKING IT

I think of a lion loose in Lewiston, ninehundredtwentynine
students think of it

which make ninehundredtwentynine atleast lions

loose or leaping green in sleep

among leaves or mailing letters

Making jokes excuses noise

in great & shaking air

& some have peaceful tails

& the rivergod religion fluid druid says

listen make notes keep going

beside the lion is a snake

which makes

striking sense

by Pamela Alexander

Part II

Soldiers

by Ward Just

"If you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome; if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent; if you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe."
—Lord Salisbury

MACHINES

The machine stood on a vacant knoll, its foreshortened gun pointed north. There were deep ruts in the stony earth, and the land fell away and then came up steeply in a rise two miles distant. This was Fort Hood in East Texas, and the machine was a Sheridan tank.

The sergeant was brisk. He was explaining the machine, how it worked, what the equipment did and how it did it. He touched and patted the machine as he spoke, pointing to the huge treads and kicking them, and then looking at the gun and smiling, patting the armor plate. There was no trouble with this vehicle, Sergeant Rosario said. It is the best vehicle he has had in twenty years in the Army. We looked at it, dark green against the sandy earth, squat and lethal, permanent as the sphinx or some other rough beast. The sergeant opened a flap at the front end and extracted a canvas cover, then unhooked other flaps to show how the canvas could be deployed so that the machine could float, could move through the water like a fish. But it was not really meant for water warfare, because the guns did not work well in water. It was designed to act in support of the cavalry scouts, the armored personnel carriers; the cav was the spearhead, the reconnaissance element, of an armored division. As the point man was the scout for a platoon of infantry, so was the

cavalry troop the scout or point man for an armored or mechanized division. Of course classic infantry doctrine permitted the cavalry element to work in support of troops as well, covering the rear and the flanks, capable of suppressive fire in case of heavy engagement. More than that, Sergeant Rosario said, it was a vehicle equipped with a parachute. It was air-droppable, capable of accompanying paratroopers and floating to earth and landing undamaged. That was what made it special; that, and the swimming component and the Shillelagh missile. Now the airborne had a real armor element. The main gun could hit a dime on edge at two thousand meters. That is what they did at a demonstration for members of Congress: hit a dime on edge at two thousand meters and balloons at five hundred meters. Of course the real range was closer to ten thousand meters. The exact distance was classified.

Back in the Public Information shop there were pictures of those who had driven it. Congressman Poage, General Westmoreland, the faces not amused underneath steel pots, with the flash of the division on the pot: the 1st Armored Division ("Old Ironsides"), the 2nd Armored Division ("Hell on Wheels"). Anyone could drive it; it was a machine designed for simple operation. It was there to act in support of troops, a reconnaissance vehicle, you understand, not precisely a tank. At seventeen tons, it could never be called a tank; the M-60, the American main battle tank, weighed in at more than fifty tons. So it is wrong, really, to call this vehicle a tank. It is a reconnaissance assault vehicle. That's clear, isn't it?

Inside now, the sergeant has a rag in his hand and absentmindedly passes it over the metal. The hatch looks to be a manhole cover—heavy, rounded, thick metal—and the sergeant is pointing at the dials and the switches, the guidance systems for the Shillelagh missile and the M-81 152-millimeter gun. He calibrates the sight, and focuses it, and offers it for viewing. The optics are wonderful, the hill two miles away coming into sharp focus, the depth of field very intimate; it's like looking through a camera with a long lens. One twists the dials and they mesh silently, and the scope moves left, right, up, down, and the sergeant explains that when you are firing the gun, it is the turret that will move. The machine can be headed in one direction while you are firing in another; there is no limit to the field of fire. The sight is so clean you can see little particles of lint, an anomaly but true as you look through it. The sergeant explains about the dials and switches, which operate as an aircraft dashboard operates. You have to go through checkouts before the missile or the gun will fire, and if there is a malfunction anywhere a light will blink on.

So look here, the sergeant says, and points to the

ammunition containers. The machine is capable of carrying ten Shillelaghs and twenty rounds of 152-mm. artillery. In addition, there are 9000 rounds of 7.62-caliber ammunition for the M-60 machine gun. There are God knows how many rounds for the brutal .50-caliber machine gun which is mounted on the cupola, fired by hand. What firepower that is, the sergeant says. Do you see what the destructive capability is? The guns can be fired more or less simultaneously, except, of course, the big main gun, which fires both the missile and the artillery round. And what is new about it is that the shells, the cartridges in the main gun, self-destruct. They are burned and destroyed *inside the breech*. It takes less than a minute, and then you can fire again. Fire and keep firing, and how simple that is compared with the old tank, which you had to unload by hand and then drop the hot shell casings on the floor of the vehicle. Now they jet CO₂ into the breech to cool it off, and it takes just sixty seconds. Beyond that, the sergeant goes on, there is a full complement of smoke grenades, to lay down a smoke screen and make good an escape. And of course the XM-44 Light. That goddam wonderful light that is set to move with the gun, so you can fix a man or another machine in the light and therefore fight at night.

"I think he wants to drive it," the PIO man said to the sergeant.

"Come on and drive it," the sergeant said. He was a Latino, very friendly now because I had been listening with care to his explanations and not asking very many questions.

"No," I said, "you drive it." I regretted saying that right away, and Sergeant Rosario shrugged and put on his helmet and spoke into the tiny microphone fitted to his helmet so it came out and touched his lips. I looked down and realized for the first time that someone else was in the machine. It was the driver, hidden in the bowels up front, his head just visible. The sergeant had explained that each tank had a four-man crew, the commander (himself), the driver, the gunner, and the loader. There are three tanks to a platoon, and three platoons to a troop. There are three troops to a squadron, which is commanded by a lieutenant colonel.

So we drove off, the engine releasing a high whine. The tank drove like a Buick, accelerating easily and powerfully, turning in a second and moving now up a hill. The machine could climb a sixty-five-degree angle, and while the speedometer said it could do sixty miles an hour, the best this particular tank had ever done was forty-three miles an hour. It would be devastating in desert warfare, the Sahara perhaps, or the Gobi. I focused the gun as we drove, calibrating the azimuth, and pretended I was firing at the small shed at the base of the rise. The shed moved around in the sight, and

then I had it fixed. I fired four missiles and three shells, pulling on the pistol-grip and watching them move to the target, correcting them in flight, and hitting it bang on, exploding the wood into a thousand fragments with the first missile, and then hitting it again and again, and lobbing the artillery shells back of the shed to catch the Japs or Krauts or Viet Cong or whoever, *Comanches*, as they fled the fortified position. The enemies exploded along with the shed. Then I watched the infantry come up from behind, secure the objective, mop it up, and report back that the place was *taken*. Now the rest of the division could come through the pass. Yes, colonel, that tank did it, routed the Boche . . .

The sergeant had said that you could guide the missile while it was in flight, watch it even as it arched out of the gun and turned, a bird of prey seeking its target. You could sometimes miss with the artillery shell, which was fired like a rifle. But you never missed with the Shillelagh—oh, well, occasionally. But not if you knew what you were doing.

Sergeant Rosario had given me a helmet equipped with the radio, and now I pushed the button that permitted me to speak. The static was ominous in the background as we chatted back and forth, the tank charging up and down small hills. Rosario said you could fire while under way, and there wasn't much kick to it. That was the idea, to fire while moving.

. . . and aiming again with that marvelous scope, looking through it like a cinematographer, seeing it with Antonioni's eyes, watching the land bounce and jiggle with the motion of the tank. Now I came away from the glass and looked out the turret. I still had the helmet on, and I put my clipboard away and forgot about notes and looked at the land rushing by. If you had a tank like this, you could do damn near anything, do what Patton did, wheel an army ninety degrees, run a hundred miles in thirty-six hours and relieve the airborne at Bastogne. It was invulnerable, safe, a world to itself, this one tank with the firepower of a platoon of men; and more dependable, a damn sight more dependable with the armament and the Shillelagh.

Rosario was giving instructions to the driver, who peeped through an aperture in the front. He said that the range of the tank was three-five-three miles, sir. Carried one-five-eight gallons of gasoline.

. . . hell, more than a platoon. More firepower than a company, when you counted everything, the missiles along with the artillery, the big .50 mounted on the cupola and the .30 bound coaxially with the main gun, that to keep the bastards honest, keep their heads down. And maneuverable, fast, through a river or up a steep hill. You could hide behind that hill and just lob the shells over it, so much firepower there that you could bank on hitting *something*. Stand off and hit and keep

hitting, and when it was tough, when you were up against the Commies, the Russian T-54 or T-55 or T-62, the big babies, well, you just high-tailed it out of there at forty-three miles an hour. You got out, and you were fast enough to do it, because the machine was smart, damn smart, and knew what to do. If you got out of the sights of the T-62 you would be all right. Live to fight another day. (And, oh, God, if the Reds were looking the other way for just sixty seconds, you could put a Shillelagh on them, home the missile in on that fat ugly armor plate blasting it to smithereens . . .)

We came back to the knoll and shut the machine down, its engine moaning as it died. There was complete silence on the hill, as the sergeant smiled and looked at the tank. What else did I want to know? I had been a fan of the infantry, always; tanks were coffins (what was the movie? *The Iron Maiden*; Bogart was in it). But that machine, so sleek and unforgiving, hard as a good welterweight, lean, fast, nimble. It was a machine for the seventies. Thank God the American Army had tanks. There isn't anything a man couldn't do with a squadron of tanks. Uh, reconnaissance assault vehicles. Nothing.

There are still a few Sheridan tanks in Vietnam, but not very many. The command there did not ask for them, but when they were sent, accepted them with good grace; they were machines, after all, and therefore useful. The Department of the Army wanted the tanks in the best possible hands, and so the first shipment was consigned to the 11th Cavalry Regiment, whose commander was Colonel George Patton III. A carbon copy of his old man, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Patton ran what was known as a very tough outfit—"I do like to see the arms and legs fly," he once said, and the regiment's motto was *Find the bastards, and pile on!* There was no fixed doctrine for the Sheridan in Vietnam, so Patton's men had to decide what to do with the machine now that they had it. Classic cavalry doctrine calls for the Sheridan to operate in support (protection) of reconnaissance patrols—that is, to protect armored personnel carriers (APC's) against enemy tanks. But there were no enemy tanks to speak of in Vietnam, so the Sheridan could be used as an assault vehicle. The classic cav troop is nine vehicles, so Patton's people decided to sprinkle the Sheridans in among the APC's. As the Sheridans reconnoiter a road, then, the formation would look like this:

APC S APC APC S APC S APC APC

Or, moving through a wood, on line:

The first official report lists 16 major equipment failures, 123 circuit failures, 41 weapons misfires, 140 ammunition ruptures, 25 engine replacements, and persistent failure of the 152-mm. main gun.

APC
APC
APC
S
S
S
APC
APC
APC

It was lethally symmetrical. In Vietnam, the Sheridan could operate as a main battle tank, and in Vietnam, the record was very mixed. Some (not many) have used the word catastrophe. The Army contends, probably rightly, that the problems with the Sheridan were no greater than those with any new weapons system. And the Sheridan was a "weapons system" as surely as the scout cavalry of Ghenghis Khan was a weapons system. This tank, the Sheridan, was the latest refinement of a tactic dating to biblical times. Any dedicated armor commander can quote the line from Judges 1:19, "And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountains; but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." What else was it but a chariot of iron? There was the Shillelagh missile and the 152-mm. gun and the airborne and swimming capabilities; but at root, now as then, it was an iron chariot. And the Army called it a weapons system, like the ABM or the Polaris.

The first time around in South Vietnam, the performance marks were not high, and the reasons had nothing to do with the Shillelagh, which was not deployed to Vietnam. It had to do with the highly sophisticated mechanisms. The first official report lists 16 major equipment failures, 123 circuit failures, 41 weapons misfires, 140 ammunition ruptures, 25 engine replacements, and persistent failure of the 152-mm. main gun. Sixty-four Sheridans were sent to Vietnam in February, 1969, and after the breakdowns were reported to the authorities in Washington, a new set of instructions was sent to the squadron commanders. Performance improved thereafter, as the men in the field made frequent checks for fuel spillage and vegetation-clogged air intakes, kept a high stockage level of spare periscopes, and were very, very careful in loading the highly flammable 152-mm. ammunition. Those were four of the new procedures detailed in a long list.

In partial explanation of the failures, the Army would cite the vehicle's long and complicated history. Development of the Sheridan was initiated in 1959, long before substantial American involvement in Vietnam. Indeed, it was not intended for a tropical environment. It was intended (in that ominous phrase) for

"the plains of Europe." The Army's rationale went like this:

A significant and immediate increase in mobile protected firepower is required to offset the quantitative and, perhaps, qualitative superiority of Soviet armored vehicles. Since tank gun development appears to be reaching the point of diminishing returns and a new parallel approach is essential, the potential of the guided missile should be exploited in order that a direct-fire, armored vehicle-mounted missile system can be available for operational use at the earliest possible date.

The operational requirements, the "roles and missions," were written in 1958. There was then on the drawing board a machine called the T-92, the fruit of an armored board that assembled after World War II to devise a means of protecting lightly armored scout vehicles. The role of these scouts was not to fight, but to reconnoiter; but in a tough spot, the board believed, they must have some means to protect themselves. The requirement was difficult because the value of the armored scout was first, speed, and second, mobility. In World War II, the scouts often went in jeeps equipped only with a light machine gun, no use at all against an armored enemy. So the idea was to beef up the recon element, beef it up with well-armed tracked armored personnel carriers supported by some kind of scout vehicle with a heavy gun. But to be effective, the latter had to go with the former; no good, in other words, if the machine with the gun had to stay behind as the APC swam the stream. In 1958 it was clear that with the T-92 all the Army had was just another light tank. It wouldn't do. What the Army needed was an armored *reconnaissance assault* vehicle.

In 1958 and 1959, as the Army contemplated a holocaust in Europe, there were four very tempting possibilities, and in short order, the possibilities became requirements. First, the machine must be able to swim—"Not the goddam Rhine," as Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Ameel, a systems staff officer in the office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development (ACSFOR), later put it, "but a stream, a small river, and not at full flood." In World War II, the machines had frequently been obliged to wait for the bridge-builders before they could proceed; operations were delayed, opportunities missed. Second, to complement the airborne, the machine must be air-droppable, by parachute. General Maxwell Taylor was Chief of Staff of the Army in 1958 and 1959, and Lieutenant General James Gavin was Chief of Research and Development; both men were dedicated paratroopers. Owing to budgetary restraints and the sentimental attachments of paratroopers, the Army was being "airbornized" for quick deployment of

troops; former airborne officers were, in fact, running the Army. Taylor and Gavin, among others, saw the Sheridan as the chance to get an armored component for the paratroopers at last. Third, the development of guided missiles was proceeding apace, and only a fool could overlook their application to tanks—or, in the case of what was to become the Sheridan, armored reconnaissance assault vehicles. Fourth, the bane of tankers since the invention of the tank has been disposal of the artillery shells. They are heavy (made of brass), expensive, and dangerous—fire-hot when first ejected, and hazardous rolling around the inside of a tank. In addition, the fumes give off an ammonia-like aroma, nearly noxious, and seriously reduce the combat effectiveness of the tank crew. Further, the brass is so expensive that it is double-used: on firing ranges the brass casings are collected and sent back to the factory for reissue. That was complicated and inefficient. Thus, the Army would sponsor the development of a *combustible cartridge case*. It would, so to say, self-destruct inside the tube; no fuss, no muss, no bother. (The combustible cartridge case now has a bad name, so with its genius for nomenclature the Army has renamed it the non-metallic cartridge case.) As a collateral to all of this, the main gun would embrace Robert McNamara's principle of commonality—it would fire both the missile and a 152-mm. artillery round, and it would be called the Universal Combat Vehicle Missile System; and if it worked, it could be fitted to the M-60 Main Battle Tank (in use now) or the coming MBT-70.

Now there were companion developments as well, and what that meant was truly a self-contained combat arm. Work began on the M-113, which was the classic armored personnel carrier; the M-114, which was the scout; and the M-551, which was the Sheridan. Therefore: one type of vehicle for point reconnaissance, one for troops, and the third, the Sheridan, for fire support. In each troop there would be yet a fourth vehicle containing a 4.2-inch mortar. If you were a tank man, the possibilities of such a formation were dazzling. Compared to World War II—well, there was no comparison. And best of all was the Sheridan, equipped with the long-range, high-hit capability of the Shillelagh. It could defend the recon elements against enemy armor anywhere. It could, that is, as long as it got in the first shot. The Russian tank of the 1950s was the T-55, and the Sheridan could not stand up to it; neither could it stand against a .50-caliber machine gun at short range. But if it got its licks in first with the Shillelagh, or in certain circumstances with the 152-mm. main gun, it would hold its own.

So it was designed as an air-ferried assault vehicle with a gun launcher capable of firing both the Shillelagh (itself still in the development phase) and the 152-mm.

artillery shell, “the only one of its kind in any army in the world,” a HEAT (high-explosive, antitank) shell capable of penetrating any armor. Packed into the gun would be highly sophisticated fire-control and guidance equipment. The 152-mm. artillery round would have the unique feature of destroying itself *inside the tube*, to permit the gunner to rapid-fire without worrying about shell ejection. And there was more to it than that: apart from the shell, there was under development the high-explosive multipurpose round, the grim XM-409, whose objective was to provide a so-called “soft target” capability—people, unarmored vehicles, flimsy structures, and the like. In Vietnam there was added yet a third shell, the canister round, a blunt-nosed bullet which exploded on impact and distributed 9800 “fleshettes,” which look like little roofing nails with barbs on the end; the canister round was for use against people, or personnel. Perhaps more important than any of them, and another legacy from World War II, was the night-fighting ability. A high-power searchlight had been developed, but tankers were understandably reluctant to use it. So the engineers invented the ambient scope, which acquires light from the stars or the moon and concentrates it, and to augment that there was the Xenon searchlight, which, with a pink filter, is powerful and difficult to see. What it gave the cav was a twenty-four-hour fighting ability. Fight around the clock. There was a continuing problem with soft targets, so the Army developed a white phosphorus round, the XM-410, meant to be employed for screening, marking, and fire-making. There was, in addition, a target-practice training round, the XM-411. The XM-411 was developed as a cheaper alternative to the XM-409 and the XM-410. Nor was that all. Development of three more ammunition rounds was initiated in the mid-1960s, among them a grenade launcher to dispense smoke.

The Army contends that there are eleven different state-of-the-art improvements in the Sheridan, not least of which was the Shillelagh missile system, which early on acquired an independent life of its own. Shillelagh, lethal, eye-guided, was considered so promising that the army developers decided it could fit all the tanks of the future. Its specifications were written into the MBT-70—the monster tank, “the dream tank,” the \$700,000-a-copy main battle tank scheduled for the 1970s, if the American economy can support its deployment—and into the M-60, the current main battle tank. It required fitting a new turret on the M-60, and work on that proceeded in 1964 and is still proceeding. One mentions it at all to make clear that the Shillelagh was an instrument apart from the Sheridan, and indeed in terms of pri-

orities it may have been the more important of the two. It is difficult to tell from this distance.

The development of a weapons system is a highly complex matter, and the more requirements there are, the more complex it becomes. The addition of one requirement tends to lessen the effectiveness of another, and what happens is that all the requirements are balanced, or should be. It demands a very stern sense of priorities. The classic example is the badly fudged TFX (now the F-111), the fighter-bomber-reconnaissance aircraft which Robert McNamara insisted be made compatible to both the Navy and the Air Force, both of which had different missions for the plane and different environments from which it flew (carriers in one case, airfields in the other). So it was with the Sheridan. The troubles began when the Army added the airborne requirement. To be dropped from a C-130

airplane, the tank had to be light. To withstand the shock on the ground, it had to be rugged.

In 1965, when the Army commenced to test the Sheridan, it was observed that the flywheel on the engine was fluttering. It was not equal to the load because it was made out of aluminum. Why? Because aluminum was lighter than steel, but when it operated under heavy pressure it began to warp. (In Vietnam, the aluminum flywheel was junked.) At the third airdrop test at Fort Knox, when the tank hit the ground, the floor dropped out. So the floor was taken out altogether, and the bottom was cross-reinforced. In the beginning, the turret was constructed of aluminum—until the engineers discovered that so much aluminum was needed to reach the required protective levels that the turret ended up heavier than it would have with steel. In 1959, when Sheridan doctrine was devised, army plan-

DIARY OF A MAJOR

The successful, comfortable, rounded ones dominate the Army. Through them emerge the broad outlines, and those are the outlines of the regulars, the professionals who define the system. But there are others who fit into no category, who do not see the romance in commanding a battalion of infantry or firing a 155-mm. gun or driving a Sheridan tank; indeed, they find no particular exhilaration in war itself. They are not positive thinkers. They tend to question, to brood, to worry, and one is left to wonder what impelled them into the Army in the first place.

—Oh, hell, I liked military school and one thing led to another and it just went from there.

—I'm military. A military family. My old man.

—... fun ...

They exist like beached fish. The Army tolerates them, and very occasionally gives them encouragement. The very bright ones are often put into oddball assignments, and some of those with real panache volunteer for the Special Forces, or did; even among the outsiders the Special Forces in 1970 has lost much of its appeal. They are linguists or historians or inventors or adventurers who have found themselves inside the Army, and endure in spite of it. What seems to attract them is the discipline and tradition of the institution, its honor, and the often vague feeling that some of society's best ought to be soldiers. The spirit is at root elitist, for which no apologies are offered. If the best do not serve, it leaves the institution to the mercies of the worst.

But there isn't much place in the American Army for a bookish or introspective officer, or any one who is a loner or outsider by temperament; an outsider, in Army terms, is a critic and therefore an irritant. You don't

find Siegfried Sassoon or Guillaume Apollinaire around the officers' club bar at Bragg. The outsider, like the West Point cadet who lives near the University of California at Berkeley, walks on eggshells: "I'm home for thirty days," the cadet said, "and I'm dueling for thirty days." They often conceal themselves under rough or silent exteriors, and finally at major or lieutenant colonel they say the hell with it and resign. They find little sense of community in an organization so rigidly structured, whose tone and style so often resemble a men's locker room. They look at kindred spirits among the older men, and what they see is compromise. Compromised men who have found a neat noncontroversial niche and have tucked themselves away in it, remote in a way that prep school masters are remote. It is an easy matter then to be witty about it or to rationalize, and conclude that a military career was a mistake from the beginning; an aberration, a man can say, crazy from the outset. But a man who doesn't fit in must somehow explain those who do, and it is doubly difficult when the military mystique is so wrapped up in images of masculinity, man's fate and man's soul in the shape of a ... ball.

—Allrightyoumen, it's gonna be tough, and we'll find out which ones can take it and which ones can't. Who's man enough.

It is not a question of anything so grand as philosophy or motivation or in 1970 whether the Vietnam War is good or bad and the precise degree to which one is an accomplice to it; the Army as an institution is much more interesting than any of these questions, so what a man comes down to are details, personal matters. An officer is thirty or thirty-five, came to maturity during the Eisenhower years, and dimly remembers the victorious dispatches from the Second World War, the stability and order represented by George C. Marshall, the soldier's soldier, at the elbow of FDR and Harry Truman.

ners envisaged a war in Europe. It was decided that there was no need for armored protection on the floor because scouts, not Sheridans, would be out in front, in effect clearing the way of mines. But in Vietnam, the Sheridans were in front and mines proved to be the biggest problem. So 1000 pounds of armor was added to the floor, which had the effect of ruining the airdrop capability as well as the escape hatch for the driver (in the Sheridan, the driver sits well forward and is provided with a manhole-cover-like escape hatch for emergencies). Other concessions were made to assure its amphibious capabilities.

The cost is \$335,000 each, and this for a machine whose utility is limited, to use the most generous word. Its armor can be penetrated by a B-40 rocket (the type used by the Vietnamese Communists) or by a .50-caliber machine gun. It cannot stand against any of the Russian

tanks in a head-to-head, and its highly sophisticated mechanisms make it difficult to use in places like jungles or deserts, where, on the one hand, the engine exhausts become clogged and overheated and, on the other, the combination of sand and heat makes it intolerable to operate. It has been tested in Alaska and found wanting, and the specifications warn that the speed over water is but 3.8 miles per hour. If the speed of the current exceeds that limit, "maneuverability and control are substantially affected." Two requirements established in 1959 have been waived. One of these was silence, which is, as one might imagine, a critical element in a reconnaissance vehicle. Tests in Panama disclosed that the whine of the engine could be heard three miles away, and that the "signature" of the rooster tail (exhaust smoke) was definite and unique.

There were technical troubles from the beginning,

In 1970 he is caught between that impulse and the murderous, irrational impulse of the nineteen sixties: Kennedy, Vietnam, King, Kennedy again. At thirty or thirty-five the loner after a time becomes a compulsive outsider, and then it is a matter of personal honor to stay honest; to resist or resign, the Army and the society that bred it being what they are.

But that is a composite picture, and it is wise to avoid composites. The major whose Vietnam diary excerpts appear here is an outsider who appears every inch the professional soldier. He is beautifully educated, almost scholarly once you talk to him, a man fascinated by the witlessness of history, and by novels like The Charterhouse of Parma. Read it for an appreciation of isolation, darkness at high noon.

WJ

11 January. *It's all so sad. Can I put up with this sort of thing until I have sufficient rank to avoid it? Or is it everywhere in the Army? And if I stick with it, will I be a desiccated staff lieutenant colonel at forty, perpetuating the sterile, dull system?*

3 February. *Another "accident." I would wager we lose (in the unit) an average of one man a week killed or badly wounded because of accidents. Today a young soldier almost blew off his right hand with a blasting cap. It was a horrible wound, what remained of the hand, purple-black, torn apart, pouring blood, while the young soldier looked at it dumbfounded, his lips mumbling. A pathetic sight. As a measure of my empathy, I thought of Chopin.*

9 February. *I slept very late after a night of hard, but "busy" work and then went to lunch . . . AFVN radio was broadcasting a speech of Senator Kennedy's in which that man, mouthing the intelligent conclusions of his staff, was passionately declaiming against the present Vietnam strategy . . . not very profoundly. Suddenly a lieutenant at our*

table, feeling the sympathy he knew he was about to enlist from everyone there, burst out feelingly: "I am ashamed to admit that man is senator from my home state." Another officer, taking his cue, said: "We've got the solution: Right here." [Meaning the military solution, not, apparently, to be applied very surgically.] There were hard murmurs of assent all around.

11 March. . . . *because knowing is probably the most important thing in life, and the source of all action. Because it is essential that I never lapse into that most tragic denial of the possibilities of human thought: "the military mind." The mind with all its parameters and limits ingrained through years of constant failure to aim beyond the "feasible" and "allowable," the "probable." I read Timon Of Athens today. . . .*

12 March. *A captain came up and asked me something about a report—and suddenly a lieutenant colonel, a common-looking man with a pompadour hair "style," veins popping out of his neck, said, "You never carry on a conversation in the presence of generals!" Our conversation, such as it was, ended. . . .*

17 April. *Long conversations last night with my young friends. They do me the honor of wondering why (how could you?) I am in the Army. I was hard-pressed to answer. The roads are beginning to diverge in the woods, I am afraid. And though they may run parallel for another three years I can scarcely hope to straddle them both beyond that time. Once I was sure that whoever would be a good soldier must be an educated man. I mean this subtly . . . slowly I shift from that conviction. An "educated man"—in my terms—becomes disenchanted with an enterprise which cannot truly enlist his abilities, his experience, what he has in his heart of hearts. . . . I cannot read Clausewitz without irony.*

many of them with the main gun and its self-destructing 152-mm. ammunition. The Shillelagh with all its 17,000 parts was perfected, but troubles continued with the artillery ammunition. Because it burned without a trace inside the tube, it was highly vulnerable outside it; that is, the shell was not encased in brass. That made it vulnerable to shocks and heat, results of the sort of accidents (land mines, for example) that are commonplace in warfare. Tankers insist that the brass-cased shell is even more dangerous in case of a direct hit, but it is not as volatile otherwise. Apart from that, the army testing agencies found that the destruct mechanism, while excellent, was not quite excellent enough. Small bits of residue often remained inside the tube, and when they did, and another shell was loaded, that shell tended to explode. Compared with these matters, problems with toxic fumes and flarebacks were as nothing. The Army devised a Scavenger system to eliminate the residue; according to tankers in Vietnam, this now works well. But as late as 1967, eight years after development began, the army R&D division considered junking the gun and remaking it to accept conventional 152-mm. rounds. Then, partly on a hint from the Navy (which uses a similar apparatus), the Scavenger system was installed, and now after each firing, jets of air are directed through the muzzle. The gun is operable, but it requires care and a good deal of it, and problems remain. As the Army elaborated: "Sensing at ranges of less than 1000 meters is difficult due to firing shock, vehicle displacement, and smoke obscuration." There is a bit of uncertainty remaining with the marvelous night light (the gunner is blinded by the flash of the gun reflected into the light), and there are safety measures hard to maintain in a pitched battle. For example: no foot soldier must be within five hundred yards of the tanks in a forty-five-degree arc when the missile is fired. It is sometimes subject to shortfall. Owing to carbon monoxide released by the missile, the Army recommends that there be no more than four firings a day; more would be dangerous to the crew.

Colonel Merritte W. Ireland, Patton's chief of staff in the 11th Cavalry Regiment, accurately points out that nothing is invulnerable in warfare. There isn't anything that can't be got at, and that includes the Sheridan. For himself, he is satisfied with the performance. But both the project officer, Ameel, and Ireland agree that maintenance, particularly in a combat environment more difficult than Vietnam (where a unit may go weeks without a contact), will be a continuing problem. The Sheridan is fully computerized and "boxed." That is, when something goes wrong, a light flashes and the commander takes out one box and replaces it with another. It's called modular construction, but in combat—that is, heavy use with high wear and tear—repairs are

going to have to be made in the field. Each black box is more complex than a television set. It takes fourteen months for the Army to train a warrant officer to repair the missile system alone. Ameel: "Where are these people going to come from in the future?" The ordinary buck sergeant can't be trained in a system as complex as the Sheridan. It is easy to work, as Ameel says, but hellishly difficult to fix. In the future, the Sheridan will be filled with sensing devices, electronic target-acquisition gear, and all the rest of the exotica now under development by army R&D. Who is going to maintain all of it?

But the Sheridan was one hell of a tank. All of that is clear enough—clear, as they say, to the meanest intelligence. It was, and is, somewhat less clear precisely what the mission of the Sheridan was to be. It could not do battle with the Soviet main battle tank, unless it could get its licks in first with the Shillelagh. While the Sheridan was fast at forty-three miles an hour, it was not *that* fast, and no faster, in any case, than the best Soviet tanks. It was maneuverable and light, it swam, and it could be dropped from the air, but in the complex of American weapons (or weapons systems) it was difficult to describe its role with precision. Colonel Paul A. Simpson, the project manager for the Sheridan in the late 1960s, had a go at it before Representative Samuel Stratton's Armed Services investigating subcommittee. "It is not a tank," the colonel said. "It is a lightweight armored vehicle. We have no other vehicle—that is, a combat vehicle—that is air-droppable." He might have added that no other nation did either; the Sheridan is unique in the history of warfare, armored or otherwise. When Colonel Simpson went on to explain the mission, the ambiguities and inconsistencies grew along with the explanation. As noted, it was oriented toward Europe to replace the M-60 main battle tank supporting cavalry regiments along the Czechoslovakian border. But the Sheridan was not a tank—how could it replace one? Colonel Simpson told the subcommittee that the M-60's were there in the first place only because the cav regiments did not have reconnaissance vehicles; the TO&E, the table of organization and equipment, called for recon vehicles, not tanks. The M-60's were there because there were no recon vehicles—that is, Sheridans. More than that, as Major General W.C. Gribble, the deputy assistant chief of staff for force development, told the subcommittee: "I think it is worth emphasizing that all of the important decisions that have been made during the progress of the tank programs have been made in the general environment of an ominous threat." That is, a Soviet threat. On the plains of Europe.

Nothing is invulnerable in warfare. There isn't anything that can't be got at.

But rippling through the congressional testimony is another, much more plausible, rationale. It is basically Simpson's point that the United States did not have a reconnaissance vehicle as required in cavalry doctrine: if you have the M-113 and the M-114, you must then have the M-551; to do otherwise would be like having cruisers and battleships without destroyers, or Wyken and Blynken without Nod. The United States did not have a reconnaissance vehicle as required in cav doctrine, and it is immaterial that no other nation did either; what is important is that the requirement was there, and because it was there, it was imperative that it be satisfied. Gribble: "The Army does not today have a vehicle which is specifically designed to meet the doctrinal requirements of its armored cavalry. The Sheridan is that system. In the absence of the Sheridan, armored cavalry units have been equipped with tanks. As a result, there are tank battalions which do not have modern tanks. The situation is justified at the particular moment because the armored cavalry regiments are stationed in Europe. The armored divisions are in training. But it is a situation which we are very anxious to correct."

The saga of the Sheridan is not ended. Eleven years after conception, the machine has cost the American government something over one billion dollars. Estimates range from \$1.2 billion to \$1.5 billion, and this for a "weapons system" which was supposed to be fielded in 1964 and is not entirely satisfactory today. The heart of the matter is this: in the complex of weapons in the American arsenal, the Sheridan played, by any estimate, a minor supporting role, even granting the proposition that tanks have any tactical role at all in post-1970 warfare. The Sheridan is precisely what a civilian official in the Pentagon said it was: "The Rolls-Royce of tanks."¹

The limitations of the Sheridan were known to segments of the Army, notably the Army Material Command Technical Committee (TECOM) and the Army Munitions Command (MUCOM). TECOM, in fact, recommended a slowdown and all along the line looked at the Sheridan with a skeptical eye. Or, no, not a skeptical eye: as the tester, it wanted to be absolutely certain that the vehicle and its components were combat-ready and safe. MUCOM, as the developer and the arm spending the money, was anxious that it get the Sheridan out of the shop and into the field. Congressman Stratton's subcommittee looked into the development of the

Sheridan and concluded: "The facts as developed by this subcommittee make almost unavoidable the conclusion that so much time and money had been spent in developing the Sheridan/Shillelagh system that the developers felt irrevocably committed to production. Under such circumstances the project manager became more a captive than a manager of his project, and might understandably feel that a failure of the project to reach fruition could be interpreted as demonstrating his own lack of managerial skills and thus affect his army career. Such a condition must inevitably result in management of doubtful quality and questionable management concepts."

Of course the subcommittee was correct. Weapons systems tend to acquire a life of their own. The ingenuity of American industry is so great that the odds on solving seemingly insoluble technical problems are very favorable. The theory is that if you wait it out, the solution will in time present itself. Add to that the extraordinary sums of money available for research, and it is, or ought to be, no mystery why a Sheridan system proceeds, and proceeds at the rate of \$100 million a year. It is very difficult once the contracts are let and the development begins to derail the project—particularly in the instance of the Sheridan, where the crucial question is not whether a tank with a self-destructing combustible cartridge case is useful (of course it is useful), but whether it is needed and how great that need is. Priorities never seem to enter into it, except in the case of monstrously expensive weapons like the nuclear airplane or the Cheyenne helicopter (and the Cheyenne may not be dead yet). The defense apparatus is so complicated (and so rich) that, as Vice Admiral Hyman Rickover once observed, it is literally impossible to put an accurate price tag on weapons. TECOM's merge with MUCOM's, material commands with combat development commands, army project managers with civilian auditors, the joint staff with systems analysts, users with producers, soldiers and civilians and politicians all wound up together in a welter of conflicting loyalties and responsibilities. Gilbert W. Fitzhugh, the board chairman of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company who headed the Nixon Administration's blue-ribbon commission to study the Pentagon, put it excellently: "Everybody is somewhat responsible for everything and nobody is completely responsible for anything. So there's no way of assuming authority, responsibility, or accountability. There is nobody you can point your finger to if anything goes wrong, and there is nobody you can pin a medal on if it goes right, because everything is everybody's business. . . . They spend their time coordinating with each other and shuffling paper back and forth, and that's what causes all the red tape and big staffs in the department. No-

¹I have called it a Buick. The Pentagon man called it a Rolls. In fact, it was built by the Cadillac division of General Motors.

When estimating a potential threat—which is to say, defending a budget—the style is deep pessimism.

body can do anything without checking with seven other people.”

The common interest of all of them is to *get the project out*, get it running, get it out of the plant and into the field, because there are all the new projects coming along. Keep the General Accounting Office and the Bureau of the Budget off your back, and keep running. The nation needs its defense. The soldier wants perfect safety, or something as close to perfect safety as he can reach, and that is the reason for the complexity of the process; that, and the abundance of money. No soldier will voluntarily scrap a weapons system because *you never know*; you never know what might make the difference in a war.

The tank survives, fighting a rearguard action now but prevailing. There are places in the Pentagon where men will confide that the tank is the horse of the seventies. Obsolete, really; too costly, and bound to be replaced by helicopters. At a time of budgetary restraint, the tankers are going to lose the game; the civilians won't go along with the MBT-70, and the Sheridan has proved a heavy embarrassment. There are those voices, but you will not find them among the tankers.

“Nothing in the last twenty-five years has replaced anything else,” Colonel Ameel said, smiling. “We do not eliminate weapons, we improve them. Let me tell you something: if you are going to occupy *ground*, you are going to need a tank. I don't know of a war yet that we've ever won by”—the smile again—“backing up.”

“Well,” I said, “they say helicopters will replace the tanks.”

“If you want to *take* and *occupy* a position,” Ameel said, “you are not going to do it with a helicopter. I can demonstrate that on cost-effective grounds alone. Look, a chopper costs one point two million, right? A Sheridan only costs about three hundred thousand. Well, I can go in there and make a hell of a case on those grounds alone. A hell of a case. And when we get finished *improving* the Sheridan . . .”

“Improving?”

“Huh! We've got a hell of a lot of stuff coming along. Ever heard of the beehive missile? Well, we're working on a mechanism for *command detonation* . . .”

The military budget is an extraordinary document, an inch thick and a pound or so in weight, and in 1970 was accompanied with a handy précis containing the views of Secretary Laird. No one but an accountant can read the budget and gain anything from it, so serpentine and fleecy are the contents. The numbers are meaningless except as guideposts; more interesting is the rationale.¹

The Defense Department lives in a world of menace,

and the least of it in Southeast Asia. The principal menace is International Communism, on land, at sea, and in the air. There is a strategic nuclear threat, a general purpose forces threat, and an insurgency threat, all of them coming together under the general category of THE THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.

Lately, the soldiers have identified an internal threat

¹ A note on the Military-Industrial-Congressional-Academic Complex. Senator William Proxmire (Democrat, Wisconsin) has disclosed the relevant data: more than 2000 retired senior officers (army colonel, navy captain, and above) are employed by the one hundred largest defense contractors. In 1959, Senator Paul Douglas assembled a list of 768 former senior officers in similar employ. Following World War II, MacArthur went to Remington Rand, Bedell Smith to American Machine and Foundry, and Bradley to Bulova. The value of a high-ranking military officer to civilian industry was described with uncommon candor by Owen D. Young of the Radio Corporation of America, in an analysis written after World War I. Young was looking for a suitable chairman for RCA:

“1st. He should be well-known both nationally and internationally and he should have made such a place for himself as would enable him to speak with authority either to foreign governments or to our own government.

“2nd. He should not have been previously identified with politics because that would mean party alignment and partisan reaction.

“3rd. He should not have been identified with Wall Street or the money interests because it is important that the American people should accept the Radio Corporation as an organization of service to American interests at home and abroad rather than as an organization primarily to make a profit for Wall Street interests.

“4th. He should have had administrative experience and if possible business experience.

“5th. He should be well-known in Washington and in a position to appear before committees of Congress and before the Department and have his statements of fact accepted without question. It is particularly important in this connection that no one should be able to question his Americanism, such as they have done in several instances in the case of our international bankers.

“6th. He should be a man of public position whom to attack would be bad politics rather than good politics.”

That is really a seminal statement (it appears in Gleason D. Archer's book *The History of Radio to 1926*, and is cited by the historian Samuel Huntington, among others), as clear as it can be; it was written in the days before public relations. Today, the soldier-businessman operates as an inside man. What soldier of the 1970s could appear before committees of Congress and “have his statements of fact accepted without question”?

In 1970 the point to be made about defense industries in America is not that they exert too great an influence (which they undoubtedly do), but that they are economic dinosaurs. This is the judgment of Ernest Fitzgerald, the civilian accountant fired by the Air Force after his close inquiries into defense contracts. All the federal sugar has bloated and swollen companies like Lockheed; they are no longer competitive, and survive as clients of the Defense Department. They will be forced to reorganize or go bankrupt.

as well, and true to their style, they have written a doctrine and set up an office in the Pentagon to deal with it. Under pressure from civilians (soldiers insist), the Army has assembled data on dangerous characters and put it on the computers at Fort Holabird, an aerie in Maryland; the argument was that it was made necessary by the urban riots and the use of Regular Army units to quell them. There was a cry of alarm when the Holabird operation was disclosed, and congressional investigators learned that the data banks were gargantuan dossiers containing information on all sorts of citizens: black militants, SDS leaders, Quakers, journalists, "peaceniks," and (reportedly) a congressman or two. The Army claims it is dismantling its files at Holabird, but if Congress is wise, it will pursue its investigations; military activities are rarely abandoned altogether. "The first requirement we faced upon assuming office was to reappraise the spectrum of threats that exist in the world today," Secretary Laird told the Senate Armed Services Committee early in 1970. "These threats dictate to a large degree how we should implement our basic policies in conjunction with our allies." The quintessence of menace, as any reader of Poe or Pinter knows very well, is mystery. The unknown is more ominous than what is known, and in analyzing worldwide threats to the peace and security of the United States a man need only point to the mysterious purposes of both the Soviet Union and Communist China. The Chinese are an exquisite example because it is very difficult at any given time to know who is actually running the country, let alone its capacities in weaponry, particularly thermonuclear bombs. What if the Chinese, collectively, are *insane*? So, lurking in the background of all the estimates of enemy intentions (you need read no further than Marx for the theme) is inscrutable China—armed, as they say, and dangerous.

Read the Laird document and observe that while U.S. programs are often delayed and misfired, Soviet programs are always moving ahead very nicely. There are no TFX's in the Soviet arsenal, or if there are, we do not know about them. Laird: "The Soviet strategic threat is impressive and it is growing. We now estimate the number of SS-9 Intercontinental Ballistics Missiles deployed or under construction to be over 275, rather than the 230 as I reported publicly less than a year ago. The number of SS-11 ICBM's has also increased significantly. The Soviets continue to test improvements in offensive weapons. . . ." The technological threat? "In the long term, one of the most serious threats confronting the United States is the large and growing research and development effort of the Soviet Union." Why? "The implication of this Soviet effort for our future security cannot be clearly foreseen at this time. Because the Soviet Union is a closed society, they can conduct

their military research and development programs behind a thick veil of secrecy, making it difficult for us to assess their programs in a timely manner. However, we have seen evidence of this technology in the new systems they are deploying, including the Foxbat Interceptor Aircraft, nuclear power ballistics and attack submarines, and other impressive evidence."

We have seen evidence. The point is that it is a threat all the way around the box. Polaris submarines? The Soviets have prototypes, and are building more. Minute-man missiles? The Soviets have the SS-9 and are going to the SS-11. Aircraft? Flagon is at least as good as the F-111, and behind Flagon there is Foxbat and behind Foxbat—what?—Foxbat II. The infantry? "At the present time all of the Soviet ground divisions deployed in Eastern Europe are combat-ready. A considerable number of divisions in the Soviet Union, including several airborne divisions, are also considered either fully ready or in a state that would permit very rapid mobilization A high density of tanks, many of which are over fifteen years old, provides the Soviets on all fronts with heavy direct fire support in place of conventional artillery. . . ." If one took comfort from that, one would be wrong. "Recent changes have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of artillery tubes available to the Soviet ground forces." And the Soviets are not the end of it. The Secretary speaks next of Eastern Europe and then goes to the Far East: "North Korea is a militarily strong country that has demonstrated a dangerous aggressiveness and hostility toward South Korea and the U.S. It has some 350,000 troops and an effective air force of more than 500 combat aircraft . . ."

Nothing is safe. When estimating a potential threat—which is to say, defending a budget—the style is deep pessimism. In estimating more or less danger, the trend will always be to more; the military man wants all the support he can get. In 1970, accordingly, the proposed budget was \$77 billion to meet the entire spectrum of threats: there was \$7 billion for strategic forces, \$27 billion for general purpose forces, \$5 billion for intelligence and communications; or put another way, there was \$23 billion for the Army, \$22 billion for the Navy, and \$24 billion for the Air Force; put yet another way, there was \$22 billion for military personnel, \$21 billion for operations and maintenance, \$20 billion for procurement, and \$7 billion for research, development, testing, and evaluation. These are some of the ways the Defense Department breaks down the budget by category; the astute mathematician will note that none of the figures adds up.

Where is the corrective? Paul Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Johnson Administration, thinks the answer lies in stronger civilians. Warnke does not believe there is very

"It is their job to find threats. What else do we expect them to find?"

much wrong with the present system, or with the soldiers who run it. "They are really remarkable men," he said not long ago. "They have an extraordinary dedication to the country and to the uniform, and it is their job to find threats. What else do we expect them to find?" Natural pessimists, responsible for the country's security, military men can find a use for any object of war. Warnke was (and is) bemused by revelations of deficiencies in the TFX airplane and the Sheridan tank, which revealed, in his opinion, nothing of very great importance. The point about both machines was not that they wouldn't work (given enough time and money, American industry can make anything work), but that they weren't needed. Warnke supplied a naval metaphor: the Soviets "penetrate" the Mediterranean, and the Navy counters with a proposal to send an American fleet. "Well, what do we do then?" Warnke asked. "Hold a regatta?"

The mechanism for control is there. What has happened, according to Warnke and others, is that the civilians have declined to use it. Military men have dictated both strategy and tactics, and the machines that back them up. Civilians enter the process timidly and late, intimidated by the brass and unsure of their own perceptions. Today, the military lags behind as it has always lagged behind. It is still thinking in the world of John F. Kennedy, when the United States was prepared to "pay any price, bear any burden." The military takes its cue from civilian leaders, and throughout the 1960s civilian leaders have cited the Communist menace as the principal engine driving American military policy. Richard Nixon declares that the United States will not accept defeat in Vietnam, a statement fully consistent with those of Johnson and Kennedy before him. "So what do you expect of a soldier?" Warnke asks. "He bases his judgments on what he considers to be national policy." In other words, he follows the Constitution to the letter. What separates the military from the liberal Establishment is that the military still believes what it hears from the White House. To wit, Communism is a menace, and the United States has the right and duty to oppose it; the world is insecure, and the American Army can make it stable.

In ten years of war in Indochina the military has sought victory as it was defined (or not defined) by the civilians. While Robert McNamara struggled and argued with the Joint Chiefs to induce them to testify in favor of the nuclear-test-ban treaty, the war enlarged and grew under rules of engagement that were not monitored. One makes the point that McNamara's effort with the Chiefs was feckless, an enterprise which expended his own valuable credits while really important issues—small details in another context—were decided by the military. A former Pentagon official and admirer of

McNamara put the proposition this way: "All Bob had to do was *tell* those guys to go up to the Hill and testify [on the test-ban treaty]. They wanted to be told, and told by McNamara and the President. They wanted to be told, 'This is national policy.' The fact of the matter is that civilian control was largely a problem in McNamara's mind." In the early 1960s, by this analysis, the eyes of the civilians were on the wrong sparrows; McNamara worried about civilian control but did not exercise enough of it. Under the American system, the civilians have to control the military because there is no mechanism for the military to control themselves.

Similarly, machines. The technological revolution affects the Army as it affects the rest of society. While it may be logical to say that the tank occupies the same position as the horse in World War II, no tank man will believe it. Give up armor? While the Soviets still have the T-62? But with pinpoint artillery and aircraft, the tank has become too vulnerable. If you describe an armed helicopter as an airborne tank, what do you call the tank? A land-bound helicopter? The guns become larger, the armor plate thicker, the mechanics more complicated, and costs rise. Their backs against the wall, squeezed by the cost accountants, the tankers are desperately hoping for some breakthrough to *save the art*. It will probably end with a tank becoming a mobile sensing system (MSS).

"Look," said the colonel as we walked back from an interview at the Pentagon. "You've got to understand that none of this happens in a vacuum. We aren't just doing this to *do* it, I mean for our own amusement or anything."

"No," I said.

"You've got to estimate the *threat*."

"Of course," I said.

"And the fact is, there is a threat."

"Right," I said.

"I mean, you know."

"What's that?"

"The Soviets are working on the same damn things."

FUTURES

The war will end and the Army will endure, a volunteer force if necessary, a citizen army if possible. Either way, many of the old assumptions are now rhetorical. Nuclear bombs and missiles are taken as one of the givens of American defense, and the central question now is the division of the conventional mission. Does the Army organize itself to fight a land war in Europe, or does it

envisage (as John F. Kennedy evidently did) a series of brush-fire wars, local insurgencies in which American military power is brought to bear on the side of whoever appears friendliest at the moment? This central question turns on the lessons learned in Vietnam.

The war and its meaning dominate the Army today, dividing it along many lines, but primarily according to age and rank. There are exceptions, but older, senior officers tend to look upon the war as an aberration not to be repeated, a mistake better forgotten. "I will be damned if I will permit the U.S. Army, its institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions, to be destroyed just to win this lousy war," was the way a senior American general in Vietnam put it. Younger men believe that Vietnam is the face of the future. One is speaking of the professionals now, and the subject is very complicated in their minds. While many of the older men regard the war as an aberration, they often add that if the Army had been permitted to fight it properly, then it could have been won ("Just two divisions in Laos, two lousy divisions . . ."). They mean by that a total national commitment, and a policy encouraging the allies to carry the struggle to the homeland of the enemy (by this analysis including most of Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam). The younger professionals, some of them, believe that the United States could have won it by carrying the fight to the guerrilla, by attacking the roots of the tree (in one colonel's phrase), not the branches. The men who believe this have studied Mao and Che and Giap on the aesthetics of guerrilla warfare. (There are a few others who have read the same books and concluded that it was an impossible mission; but these are the genuine radicals, who are in a very small minority.) For the older men, the villains tend to be timorous civilians and the left-wing press; for the younger men, they are the tradition-bound senior generals and the craven press. For one group, it is the arrogance of McNamara; for the other, the stupidity of Westmoreland.

The central lesson? For the professional soldier it is not that the war was unwinnable, but that American power was not applied at the right time in the right places, either by bombing the North or by shifting to a guerrilla strategy. The war was not in any case intractable, merely difficult, and made more so by the foolishness of those who were managing it. There were other difficulties as well. William Westmoreland, in a bitter speech at the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, said early in 1970:

The armed forces of the United States have never failed our country on the field of battle. Starting with our own revolution, we have never lost a war. I ask you in all humility, and yet with a deep sense of pride, "What more could you ask

of your soldiers?" Your army can accomplish for an extended period only those missions that are accepted by our citizenry for whom the army exists to support. . . . The strength and vitality of a democratic society depend on an enlightened electorate. . . . But because national security is everyone's concern, most everyone joins in the loud debate. Some speak from knowledge; others do not. Yet all proclaim authority. *Military leaders, however, are singularly qualified by education, experience, and profession as a group to address military aspects of national security problems thoroughly, competently and without equivocation. And that is their responsibility under law.* [Italics added]

Westmoreland is not Douglas MacArthur, either by temperament or intellect; he is not a genius as a field commander, and West Point is deep in his bones (" . . . without equivocation"). But he has a very strong streak of decency, and an even stronger streak of responsibility. No magical insight is needed to see what Westmoreland is getting at; and it is no surprise to learn, in retrospect, that he would have resigned his command on the issue of the management, or mismanagement, of the war—he would have resigned, he says now, if he had been in overall charge of the military effort in Vietnam. But he was not. The Ambassador had the political war and Admiral Sharp had the air war and the Vietnamese had their sovereignty and what COMUSMACV had was control of U.S. ground forces and the advisory effort to the Vietnamese. With the war divided, the White House ruled; or thought it did.

Now, in 1970, senior military men want to lay down new rules, a new definition of the role of the Army. No more Vietnams, where the armed forces carry the can for civilian stupidities. The next war is going to be directed by the military, so "those who sacrificed the most" (in Westmoreland's phrase) will not be abandoned to politicians or journalists. If you believe, as soldiers do, that the institution of the Army is singular in American society, then the implications are very ominous indeed. A theory of stab-in-the-back is followed logically by savior politics: a man on horseback. Westmoreland is not that man, and he would be personally mortified at the suggestion; but it is a notion which proceeds inescapably from the Vietnam tragedy, and what will surely become a search for scapegoats. Who is responsible?

A RAND Corporation analyst believes the central civilian failure was the failure to supply war aims: "What isn't understood is that we do not have a German general staff. To the Americans, all wars are defensive wars—done in response to someone else's thrust. We don't move first. And in Vietnam, we mistook exhortation for policy. There was still something very romantic

about the American Army—*roll those tanks through the Michelin plantation*. These things were entirely irrelevant to Vietnam. Saigon was characterized by reactive planning, second-strike mentality, and contingency plans for every possible eventuality.” In Vietnam the operations were the strategy, but there was no end point. There was no objective, in the Clausewitzian sense, because the civilians in the White House and the Pentagon did not know what it was they wanted, beyond an independent anti-Communist (later non-Communist, and finally partially Communist) South Vietnam. There was no point at which a soldier could look around him and say, Mission Accomplished; not as long as there were still Vietnamese in Vietnam. Beyond that, the civilian leadership did not rally the country round the war; it insisted on both guns and butter, a short-term, short-sighted formulation that created awful psychological dilemmas, among them the inequality of sacrifice. It was a bankrupt policy, fundamentally immoral and inherently divisive.

When historians look into it, they will find that the civilians did not control the war in its most crucial aspects. First among these were ground combat operations, which set the tone of the war and ultimately turned the American public against it, beginning with Ben Suc and ending with My Lai. Was it the policy of the Administration to leave combat operations to the military? A very senior official, with the war from the beginning, speaking slowly and somberly, explained: “We controlled the air war, all right. I mean: whether you bomb, and where. But you can’t control operations of battalions and regiments. We would have controlled it if we could, and we sure as hell—in retrospect—should have made the attempt. Search and destroy was wrong. Wrong. Wrong. It was a mistake. I couldn’t get into the tactics. How the hell could a man on my staff get into the tactics? I was in the war [World War II], but I was never on the battlefield, and I never had one of these”—he pointed sardonically to his chest, meaning the Combat Infantryman’s Badge. “How could you go in there and talk to those guys who had been on the battlefield, *who had seen it when you hadn’t seen it?* Huh, uh! No way.”

So the civilians, dovish now, believe they did not control enough; the soldiers, wounded and angry, believe the civilians controlled too much. Or, more complicated: they controlled the strategy and inhibited the tactics. To the civilians, the problem was tactical; to the soldiers, it was strategic. So the soldier sees himself as used, then discarded. This is the atmosphere in which the general staff is plotting the curve into the nineteen seventies. What is happening is that in the Pentagon and elsewhere they are refighting the Vietnam War, reckoning where it went wrong, and

certain the Communists have two, three, many Vietnams left. If so, how does the Army organize itself? Europe is there, and Europe is important; so is the Middle East. But despite Mr. Nixon’s insistence that America will avoid foreign entanglements in the future, most military men insist the responsibility for world order is still America’s. That was the reason the Army fought in World War II and for Korea and Vietnam, and if you deny those imperatives, then what was the point of all the dead? Have Americans died in three wars for nothing? “The threat to Latin America is both real and apparent,” said a senior general. The Army intends to deal with that. One way or another.

They have erected a great stone statue at Fort Bragg, the heroic pose of the Green Beret, his eyes clear, his index finger not on the trigger of the M-16 but on the safety catch.

We will pay any price, bear any burden, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty. . . . The lyrics are John F. Kennedy’s, from the inaugural, and they are graven in brass in the lobby of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School (in 1969 the name was changed to Institute for Military Assistance). The building is modern, low-slung; walk through the corridors in full light, and the Green Berets are coming from class, huddled over coffee talking about Oswald Spengler and Bernard Fall and Joe Namath. There are others, Vietnamese, Laotians, Indonesians, British, Argentinians, Portuguese, Iranians, Greeks. The flavor is cosmopolitan.

The most interesting work being done at Bragg is in a new program called the Military Assistance Officers Program (MAOP). It is barely begun, but after intensive lobbying it appears to have the support of Westmoreland and Westmoreland’s staff. Its sponsors are quick to admit that the instruction is not all it might be, and the doctrine is barely comprehensible. There are the usual problems, in other words, but these are being handled. MAOP, according to the official army prospectus, is “a highly selective program which will carefully train officers, already qualified in their basic branch, in the broad and complex fields of economic, social, political and psychological endeavor which confront senior military commanders and staff officers in most overseas assignments. . . . Objectives of the program are to develop officers who can assist foreign countries with internal security problems and can perform functions having socio-political impact on military operations.” It must be understood clearly that this mission is a sharp departure from army tradition. If there is a model, it is General Joe Stilwell’s advisory effort to the Chinese in the 1930s and 1940s; but in

1970 there are new twists, so it is worthwhile to consider the Army's view of the world. that is, its *doctrine*, which to an army officer is as the catechism to a Roman Catholic.

The Internal Defense Development Planning Guide (internal defense is another military euphemism meaning counterinsurgency, itself a euphemism for counter-revolution), issued by the Special Warfare School in December, 1967, states in its preface:

In the years since World War Two, international Communism has won a succession of victories in its struggle for world domination unequalled since its existence. During this period, nearly 700 million people and five million square miles—about one-tenth of the total land areas of the world and about one-quarter of its population—have been brought under the control of Communist regimes.

While occupying the attention of the free world through pressure and threat of overt military action along the periphery of the "iron" and the "bamboo" curtains, the Communists have concentrated their efforts on the seizure of power in target nations through internal means. These target nations presently constitute a major portion of South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Using their established worldwide subversive apparatus to manipulate Communist Party cadres, the Communists have exploited a wide variety of techniques ranging from psychological and political action to civil war, revolution, terrorism, and guerrilla warfare to achieve established goals. Allying themselves with budding national independence movements in colonial areas, and popular front governments in former dictatorships, the Communists have scored notable successes and gained considerable support through promises of material betterment and achievement of nationalistic aspirations in a wide variety of situations and areas.

The primary and ultimate objective of the Communists has been and will remain the total subversion and seizure of governments in all target nations. This includes the replacement of governments with totalitarian Communist dictatorships.

The document goes on:

... The primary responsibility for conducting ID/D must rest with the local government. Insurgent warfare, by its nature, is an intimate affair normally fought between antagonists of similar ethnic backgrounds. The application of force by a foreign power, *unless carefully applied through the medium of the local government*, can have a debilitating effect on the government's power to control the affairs of its own nation." [Italics added]

And later still, in discussing the role of the defenders:

... Other ... harassing operations are reconnaissance patrolling, combat patrolling, raids, ambushes, aerial surveillance, "hunter-killer" operations, "eagle flights," mining probable guerrilla routes, artillery fires, tactical air strikes, "search and clear" operations, stay-behind patrols, "snooper flights," "lightning bug," "snipe hunt," *chemical defoliation, crop destruction and any other suitable tactic or technique that serves to harass the guerrilla.* [Italics added]

And finally, in defining the underdeveloped countries and their regimes the document asserts that:

... the officers in most cases exceed their civilian counterparts in administrative skill. In many nations, *military officers are used to establish new government administrative agencies or to revamp inefficient organization.*

... the level of technical skill usually is greater among professional military personnel than among the population as a whole. They have been exposed to technology, logistics, and training in modern organization. *This training gives the military man a modern outlook which is not often an outstanding characteristic of the civilian elite.*

... the military, since it represents a force in being, is *responsive to the direction of the national government and can be employed in remote areas where it would be extremely difficult to recruit a civilian organization.*

... *the military provides direct representation by the national government, and the use of uniformed military personnel portrays to the people the interest of the national government.* [Italics added]

The document is dated 1967, and it is doctrine in use today. There is no evidence that the Army's estimate of the situation now is any different from what it was then. The director of the military assistance school, of which MAOP is one part, and the commander of U.S. Special Forces is Major General Edward M. ("Fly") Flanagan, a professional, West Point '43. With charts and bar graphs, Flanagan ran through the history briefing (the Army has doctrine for everything, including history): six coups a year for the first forty years of the twentieth century, and since then it's gotten worse. There have been 300 coups since World War II, "so it's fair," General Flanagan said, "to call this the age of insurgency." Of the 149 insurgencies the Army has identified as "serious," only 58 have involved the Communists—"It's well to remember that," Flanagan said—and right now, at this moment (10 A.M., January 27, 1970), there are 38 good insurgencies, which range from Bolivia

and Guatemala to Laos, Malaysia, Uruguay, and Malawi.

Since World War II, the general went on, 87 percent of the countries the World Bank describes as "very poor" have had significant conflict. Only one of the rich nations has had one (France, in Algeria). The four causes of revolution, or insurgency, according to the Army, are national independence (Algeria), relief from oppression (the United States in 1776, Cuba in 1958), elimination of foreign domination (Indochina), and a simple desire for change. No example was supplied for the last. Flanagan was doing all this with small charts and graphs. It ended in a fifteen-point program, which included the observations that not all insurgencies were bad and some military governments were good. Tanks were useless, the military is the prime source of power in developing nations, and "unhappy people are ripe for the Communist Big Lie."

"We must develop institutions," Flanagan said. "Not the great ones like universities, but the small ones like dams, roads, culverts, schoolhouses, dispensaries, and so forth." He looked worried, and said that "there are ninety-three nations in the world which are underdeveloped, and so we have a serious problem." The U.S. Army, he went on, was the only instrument capable of *action*, the only instrument with men and money enough to contain the ninety-three potential revolutions. He had said that insurgencies would continue, but America must be careful to back the proper horses. I thought I sensed a possible conflict: either there would be no more Vietnams or many more Vietnams, and Fly Flanagan did not seem any more precise on the matter than Richard Nixon. At any event, there could not be both. Of course the contradiction could center on the definition of Vietnam. What was "a Vietnam"? Flanagan had acknowledged that the United States was no longer the gendarme of the world, "but we have some responsibility for and interest in these nations." He concluded: "The Communist threat has not gone away. In the coming era, it falls to the lot of the military assistance types to further the foreign policy objectives of the United States. That is what we are about now. That is where the action is."

The objectives, not to put too fine a point on it, are in a considerable state of flux as this is written; the Nixon Doctrine is not precise, so all there is to go on is intuition, and any fair-minded man's intuition would indicate a very conservative foreign policy in the future. Lacking any firm understanding of what the future holds, the Army is preparing a number of policies. MAOP is the spearhead of one of them, and to round out the *Weltanschauung*

it is necessary to listen a bit to the views of Colonel Samuel V. Wilson, Flanagan's deputy and a career army man of considerable, and controversial, style. Wilson was a Merrill's Marauder at seventeen, and after that went to Hollywood to help write and act in the inevitable movie. He is an unusual inner-and-outer, in the early nineteen fifties attached to CIA in Europe. In the late fifties and early sixties he was back at Bragg working with the Special Forces. In successive tours in Vietnam, he was on loan to the American Embassy, first as associate director of field operations of the aid program, second as embassy coordinator (with the rank of minister-counselor), and finally as chief of Longan Special District, a priority pacification project south of Saigon in the Vietnamese Delta. Wilson's extracurricular activities have done him no good in the Army. He has been passed over twice for brigadier general (he made it finally in the May, 1970, list, one of a token two men whose careers were, by army standards, odd), a fact that can be shrugged off until you think about some of the people who have made it with no trouble. Wilson's reputation is mixed, but he is sophisticated and (very rare for an army officer) has an understanding of the civilian bureaucracy, specifically the characteristics of the State Department. To the extent that there are fathers of the MAOP program, they are Wilson and the young West Point lieutenant colonel John H. Johns, who wrote many of the original papers. More interesting still, Wilson understands the implications of what is happening at Bragg, and does not try to slide or slip these.

With some embarrassment, he brought out the charts and the bar graphs (they are the essential tools of military briefings) and proceeded to explain the world as viewed from Bragg. Colonel Wilson:

"The old style was cold war, limited war, and general war"—the pointer tapping at the words on the chart—"and it isn't that way anymore. What we are now involved in is low-intensity conflict, limited conventional warfare, and nuclear warfare." (Wilson was getting the nomenclature right, like a professor defining terms.) "The area in which conflict is demonstrably more likely is in the mid-limited conventional warfare back through the low-intensity conflict. This middle"—he tapped at the CONVENTIONAL WAR part of the chart—"is what we are best at. But an element of the American Army must be well prepared to participate in low-intensity warfare, the characteristics of which are now in the field manuals. The point is this: we haven't learned how to wage that which will be the most likely form of war in the coming decades." It was one of the reasons for the name change at the JFK School (from Special Warfare to Military Assistance). Wilson went on to mention that Westmoreland, General Richard Stilwell, and General

I thought I sensed a possible conflict: either there would be no more Vietnams or many more Vietnams.

Bruce Palmer "are now saying that the adviser's role is just as important as the command and general staff role."

Wilson: "We are going to turn out a man who can act as an adviser at the lower end of the scale, and a staff officer at the upper end." That is, an adviser to a foreign army at the lower end and to, say, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff at the upper end. "I am hoping that this guy . . . well, in the final analysis we are talking about a soldier-statesman, MacArthur in Japan, Bruce Palmer in the Dominican Republic . . ."

No fanfare and no luxuries, Wilson was saying; no air conditioners, huge supply depots, sprawling staffs. MAOP (pronounce that may-op) men would go lean and mean, the idea being to act truly *in support* of "the host government." Wilson mentioned the phrase "soldier-statesman" several times, and as he talked it became clear that combat operations were the least of it. What he was propounding was a soldier in a primarily civilian role. And why was that? Was he suggesting a civilian failure in South Vietnam? "Look," Wilson said, "it was the record of civilians that they . . . ah, had little discipline, were looser and less structured. They had less training and less experience. The civilian agencies do not *motivate*." Others had expanded the point, which was simply that the civilians had neither the money nor the talent, mostly the money, to undertake sustained advisory operations. In Vietnam, the civilian-run U.S. Operations Mission (USOM) was a disaster and its successor, USAID, scarcely better. When the civilian effort was merged with the military and called CORDS (civil operations, revolutionary development support), matters brightened a bit—because the military had the equipment: the aircraft, the vehicles, and the manpower—to do whatever it was that had to be done: distribute rice, move a village, build a dam, repair a road; in short, do all the things that needed doing owing to the devastation caused by the war. The ground war initiated by the Americans. The Army was tops both ways, in destruction and reconstruction, and in the future, Wilson said, it will be even more difficult for civilians to do what needs to be done: "We will be operating in a dangerous environment, and the civilian might get shot at. He's not trained for that sort of thing, and we are." Wilson was quick to aver that the lines must be kept straight, and he did not want to see a civilianized Army. "There must be a clear-cut dividing line where the military man cannot move with propriety. You have got to be extremely sensitive to these problems."

At Bragg, they are thinking of developing a soldier-statesman at both the general-officer level, and the major and lieutenant-colonel levels. They want the officer of the future to be part soldier, part secret agent, part engineer, part diplomat, and part political adviser, and equipped with languages, advanced history degrees,

and other academic impedimenta. Wilson was candid in saying that the Regular Army (he meant the Establishment) was not wildly enthusiastic, because of its feeling that a soldier should be a soldier and not something else. "We must sell ourselves to the Army," he said, "which is traditionally hostile to an elite." He might have added that it is also extremely hostile to commingling with civilians.¹

There was one final point, and it is perhaps the most important of all. It is that at Bragg the MAOP officer will be taught specifically to deal with the military forces of the host country. Wilson: "The military in the United States is very circumscribed. I am an apolitical servant of the body politic. But this is not so in the developing nations. We must understand the difference in the role of the military in the United States and the poor countries." And what is that? *It is that very often the armed forces are the only functioning institution in the nation. The only institution that one can deal with.* Wilson: "Are you going to restrict the military? Are you going to deny them the charter to advance the aims of American foreign policy? Either way, by God, you have got to educate them. . . ."

U. S. Army doctrine defines Special Forces operations in this manner: "Unconventional warfare consists of military, political, psychological or economic actions of a covert, clandestine or overt nature within areas under the actual or potential control or influence of a force or state whose interests and objectives are inimical to those of the United States. *These actions are conducted unilaterally by United States resources or in conjunction with indigenous assets, and avoid formal military confrontation.*" (Italics added) For all the emphasis, at least in public statements, on advisory efforts and permitting the "host country" to do it, the Army does not

¹ The Special Forces, now in decline, is an interesting case in point. Originally detailed to CIA, the Army found that after a bit it was furnishing most of the money for the operations. CIA did not have the men for the job (at that point, the early nineteen sixties, training and leading mercenaries in Vietnam), so they called on the Green Berets, who were then riding very high in Washington under the patronage of the Kennedys. The tail commenced to wag the dog, and after a bit the Department of Defense severed the formal link with CIA. After the Bay of Pigs, there was a National Security Council memorandum (NSCM 57) which attempted to define the dividing line between the civilians and the military in clandestine operations. But definition or no, the area is still vague; military officers are often detailed to CIA, and vice versa. In Laos, the military runs some spook operations and CIA others. It wasn't clear then and isn't clear now where the two break out. Hence, the lines of accountability are also vague.

"The object is to get the military into the political."

think that way. Or the regular army officer does not, and never mind that master's degree acquired at age thirty-five. He is action-oriented, a problem-solver ("We are interested in the 'doer,'" General Koster had said, "not the thinker"). There is very little about him that is analytical, which is one of the reasons the Vietnam estimates were so inaccurate. A diplomat is trained to observe and report, and he is not responsible for the course of events; his career is not entangled in his reports, unless he misjudges what is happening. The diplomat represents his country, proffers advice when it is asked, and otherwise watches events. It is the reverse for a military man. The principal reason why reporting from Vietnam districts and provinces was so poor was that a young major or lieutenant colonel could scarcely write of a deteriorating situation when, as a military adviser, his superiors would hold him responsible for it. All well and good to say that Binhchanh District was disintegrating under Communist pressure, not so good when the commanding officer wrote the efficiency report that described events going from bad to worse when Major X was in charge. How could a man receive a decent ER when his area of operations was crumbling? The answer was, he could not; so everything in Vietnam was always on the upswing, things were always getting better, the ARVN improving, the Communists collapsing, the advisory effort "real fine." Given the army system, there was no other way. Only a masochist participates in his own destruction. Colonel Harry Jackson, who is in effect the head of the academic board for MAOP, observes: "Soldiers are positivists. They are opposed to relativity. They say, 'Can Do!' They tell us all the time in class, 'All we ever hear about are problems. Questions. We want answers.'"

There is a cheap shot and a debating point to be made in criticism of the curriculum. It isn't much. Nineteen weeks, and most of those in vague survey seminars of Nigeria or Bolivia or Malaysia. MAOP follows the case-study method: an analysis of a Vietnamese district, the Colombian internal defense plan, the JCS Operation Exotic Dancers (a contingency plan for a Caribbean crisis à la the Dominican Republic), a conventional war on the Korean model, and a nuclear exchange. Talented instructors are difficult to find, and the doctrine even tougher. "We are just beginning," as Wilson said, and it seems fair to grant them that. It also seems fair to assume that with more money the curriculum and the instructors will improve, the nineteen weeks become thirty-nine, and before another twelve months passes there will be a full-fledged school at Bragg. Dealing with ideas, not facts; a political school. MAOP will become army doctrine, and with the right people behind it—Westmoreland, Stilwell, and Palmer will do for openers—the program will proceed.

Already the men in charge are casting about for help from the outside.¹

There are now 480 slots for MAOP-trained field-grade officers, some of them in military missions abroad, others in the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the office of International Security Affairs at the Pentagon, and in the State Department. All but twenty of these positions call for a graduate degree in addition to the nineteen weeks of MAOP. Officials at Bragg said early in 1970 that they would graduate 170 men in 1970 and increase that in 1971 if the budget grew. But as it turns out, only about 120 men will be graduated, a reflection partly of the difficulty of finding "qualified" men, partly of the reluctance of qualified men to sign up for the program. "We are going to train them to operate at any level and at any environment, with probably 75 percent of the emphasis on low-intensity activity," according to Jackson. The thrust of it will be techniques of working with the foreign military. Jackson echoes Wilson: "In an underdeveloped country, Latin America, say, the military is the most important relationship. Because the military is the only functioning institution in the country. It is the only cohesive part of the society with which a man can deal."

Elaboration on the point came from Colonel Louis Waple, one of Flanagan's two deputies, a career man who retired from the Army in mid-1970. Waple is not a man who likes euphemisms, and he laid out the MAOP program in direct and candid form:

¹ An interesting example of the military-academic complex at work. One of the places Wilson went was the Center for Rural Development at Harvard University. George Lodge, a trustee of the center, and Christopher Russell, the executive director, were called in for comment on the MAOP program. Among other observations, according to the army report of the conversation, Lodge contended that the United States "must lose its 'naïve idealism' that is often represented in programs which ultimately result in what he termed 'the crime of civil action,' programs whose results are often scandalous (e.g., utilize forced labor) and perpetuate the status quo (e.g., the power behind the military in a foreign nation). Rhetorically, Lodge asked if you needed one million dead in Mexico to make a nation or the impending threat of World War III to make Cuba a nation. . . ." Further, to paraphrase the report, Lodge questioned the notion of promoting both stability and change, as envisaged by MAOP proponents; it had to be one or the other, Lodge said. He "quipped"—according to the report—that army officers would best serve by giving every Jesuit missionary a quarter-ton truck and calling it, "Nation Building—The Contribution of the Army." Lodge and Russell concluded that they would be delighted to undertake studies for the Army, in light of the fact that the Center for Rural Development was "one of only three organizations of its kind that deals with problems of rural development . . . and institution-building in various environments around the world." At this writing, however, there is no contract. Harvard is sensitive about these matters.

"The object is to get the military into the political," he said. "Whether an operation is GO or NO-GO is as often as not a political decision. You cannot separate the two. We work within the constraints of foreign and domestic political considerations."

What will change?

"Take for an example an army battalion. As it is now in Vietnam, there are various civilians attached to it—State, CIA, AID, or whatever, and that is artificial. What you want, and what we are going to have, is a MAOP man advising that battalion commander. With the civilians, the commander does not have control. The civilian is not in the chain of command and does not appreciate the realities."

Waple was thinking of Vietnam, where various civilians are often attached to military units. His objective was to tidy it up, put it back into the system and have a direct *military* chain of command, each link with its own responsibilities. Waple went on to reinforce an earlier point: AID or State or CIA is not by nature operational, but analytical. They are not managers, either of men or of funds or of materials. "The concept," he said, "is forced on us by default. The decision to employ or not to employ weapons is victimized [that is, if civilians are in the chain]. The commander must have charge of the entire environment. The profession of arms is too demanding, and is not equal to this mission."

Waple: "There is a communications gap between the military and the civilians, and the reason is that they are talking from different perspectives. The thing that underlies a military man's life is *discipline*; when you mix the civilians into it, there is an absence of common understanding and joint doctrine, and that is very god-damned important."

Why do you need the "politicized" military officer?

"There is in 1970 no purely military decision. At one time there was, but that was conditioned by the fact that we had never lost a war." Waple paused here, letting the implications of that thought disperse. "A national course of action is polydirectional: A military offering which is strictly military in nature is misleading."

Then, in a low, bitter voice:

"We are victimized. We are called upon to take abuse from the press and the public for decisions in which we have taken no part. So we must have men on *our staff* who have got all the tickets, and who are going to make their recommendations in military terms, and in the other terms too. The political terms. *We want a voice in our own destiny*. We want a reasonable concern that we will be used in a place where it is reasonable to use us, and not improvise policy as we go."

Waple eased up a little, and concluded:

"Hell, our destiny is the country's destiny. We want

to be where we can best contribute solutions to problems." Then, again: "*We are the ones who are victimized by the lack of political direction.*"

I said then that he seemed to be thinking about an entirely different relationship between the politicians and the soldiers in the United States.

"If we were reserved just for deployment of arms, perhaps we could justify that," he said, "but we are not." He added, a trifle obscurely, "Even platoon leaders have more responsibility than that."

But what Colonel Waple was saying, and what he conceded when I asked him directly, is that somewhere in the White House there must be a piece of paper listing the caveats of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He meant Vietnam. In other words, when the decision is made, the military has its own political estimate; it has *on paper* its own judgment of the political difficulties, and what the military will require to overcome them. So if the thing is not supported and begins to fail, and the press gets into an uproar, and the hunting for scapegoats begins, a piece of paper is there; it outlines the military estimate of the situation, and what the military expects of the civilians. And if it comes to that, the paper can be brought out and published. When the witch-hunt begins, the Army will have its own record.

I said that was an old bureaucratic principle, widely known as CYA—cover your ass. No, it wasn't just that, Waple said; then he smiled and said he understood the principle, though. "The Army is an indispensable part of our national system. And we must do better," he added.

I countered: Wouldn't the MAOP man take just as many chances as the civilian, probably more chances, because he is operations-oriented?

Waple shook his head. "He is *not* going to take chances. He is going to make sure that our military involvement in country X is a realistic involvement."

I was accompanied by an escort officer during this interview, a lieutenant colonel who became increasingly anxious as Waple's conversation became progressively interesting. He now observed, in a strangled voice, "The MAOP man is a, uh, conflict manager, he is concerned with more than the terrain and the weather. . . . We cannot be content at Bragg with letting it grow like Topsy. We have got to bring all this along very carefully, not let it get out of hand because, hell, there are no restraints. No one is really looking at this program, no one from the White House and no one from State."

"Ah, so," I said.

"MAOP will never end, I think," the lieutenant colonel said.

The conversation had wound down, and Waple was talking now about the difficulty of bringing the young talent of the Army into the program. The first indica-

tion of success will be when a MAOP man becomes a general officer, and then it will be raised from the level of a crusade to the level of a program. "This will take time," Waple said, "and for a very practical reason: careers are based not only on management of men and materials, but on other factors, and one of the most important of them is barely understood today. That is, how can you accomplish a mission with a minimum of political and psychological fallout?"

Put another way: can you fight a Vietnam *sub rosa*? We were just chatting now, and I had put my notebook away. I wondered aloud if there was any place in the world where the American Army ought to be. It seemed to me that the record was mixed, Indonesian Army officers deposing Sukarno with no American help at all (although, as knowledgeable officers tended to remind me whenever I made the point, two of the five key coup-makers had spent a year at C&GS at Leavenworth, and in Djakarta they had been supplied with American arms), and 550,000 American troops had not been victorious in Vietnam. The Green Berets had succeeded in Bolivia and failed in Laos. What could you make of it? Where was the record?

The lieutenant colonel was horrified. "Why, that is like saying that children ought to grow up without parents!"

A very American judgment, that. I held my tongue. If the lieutenant colonel wanted to believe that Americans were to Vietnamese as parents were to children, it was all right with me. But I realized then how much of the MAOP program was founded on just such a premise: "A man never stands so tall as when he stoops to help a child." Now Waple was talking of the Vietnam experience, of the benefits, and I was reminded again of American optimism; slap an advanced degree over it, and it doubles and redoubles. In Asia, a man bends with the wind, accommodates himself to it, and in so doing becomes in harmony with the universe; in America, you fight it, believing that progress comes only through struggle, believing in the perfectibility of man or the American dream. Never underestimate the optimism of the army officer, either; no situation so disastrous that something cannot be salvaged (Westmoreland once told me that the Russian general staff was envious of the Americans in Vietnam: "All the experience we're gaining over here . . . their general staff wishes their army was being trained in air-mobility tactics"). Michael Herr, the best war correspondent there was in Saigon, once wrote that Vietnam was what we had instead of happy childhoods. Sure enough.

At any event, Waple was saying, "The Vietnam experience is educating us as we could get education in no other way."

"Well, yeah," I said, "except that no one ever stayed

in one job long enough to understand it." I quoted John Paul Vann's famous remark, "We don't have twelve years' experience in this country. We have one year's experience twelve times."

"No," Waple said, and he was definite. "If you didn't have Vietnam you wouldn't have had all those fellows who had six-month tours as advisers, getting all that good experience at the rice roots."

Dazzled by that, I croaked in reply: "But while you were getting all that good experience, *you were losing the goddamned war!*"

Waple smiled thinly, and the interview broke up. Then, leaving, I thought of a remark Colonel Harry Jackson had made. We had been talking of the altiplano of Peru and Bolivia, and the insurgency (or what passes for an insurgency) there, and Jackson was saying that Peru wouldn't have been nearly as tough as Vietnam. Not nearly. "Oh, look," he said, smiling and leaning across the desk. "Look. Get in there early, get in there very early and really analyze the situation. Analyze the revolution. Find out all about it, the people, the methods, the particulars. Get in there early and form it, shape it."

However zealous they may be at Bragg, it is at the Pentagon that the program will succeed or fail, because the Pentagon is where the money is. From the army Establishment there is some skepticism, principally because MAOP violates so many ancient army traditions. But compared with missiles and tanks it is a very cheap program, and the Army is entering a period of what to them is severe austerity. That is, severe austerity at \$30 billion or so. A reasonable guess is that the army Establishment will play along with MAOP to see what develops. Lieutenant General William DePuy is in the middle of these matters as assistant vice chief of staff. His estimate is this: "We are already seeing a strong feeling against anything like Vietnam. We're finding out as a nation that it's not worth the effort in terms of the central effect. The second thing is that it's a lot tougher than we thought to win. In the early 1960s, when counterinsurgency was a household word around here, it was not thought out. By any of us. We thought we could do it, and Kennedy and McNamara backed us. But they didn't understand it, or its implications, either. Counterinsurgency really is a catchphrase, you know; a slogan. The Army spent its time trying to figure out what it meant." DePuy was talking of this in a very detached manner, almost as if he were a historian reviewing the century before. But he was one of those who was in the middle of it, who went to Vietnam in the early nineteen sixties and reported back that the war was winnable (in an admirable

admission comparable to a newspaper reporter admitting a botched quotation, DePuy indicated that he didn't know enough about the situation to know how little he knew). What the Army thought it could do, he said, was win the Vietnam War quite cheaply, a few advisers and some arms, demonstrating to the Communists that wars of national liberation wouldn't work. "The Green Berets made sense, in some of their activities," he said. "But our psywar never made any sense, and still doesn't. It's a mechanized capability only.¹ We're really talking about political warfare here, and we wouldn't admit that. If you're talking Vietnam it's Ky versus Thieu, and if you're talking Bolivia it's Barrientos versus Ovando. And I am not sure the Army is the best instrument for that. The Army shouldn't be so quick to get into the problems of insurgency."

DePuy is currently preoccupied with the limitations of the institution. "Nixon says we'll help allies with technical assistance, spare parts, and so forth, but we're going to be very reluctant with our infantry, and we're looking at the outer bounds of what we are going to do. We do have certain commitments: Korea could be a full-fledged fight. But don't look for the Army to get mixed up in Latin America or Africa." DePuy, like most of his senior colleagues, is Europe-oriented, and that means weaponry. "Those of us who fought in Vietnam have a different image of the nineteen seventies than those who did not. We think about air mobility, target acquisition, the role of the helicopter."

"What about advisers?" I asked.

"Well, the advisory thing is fine and works OK sometimes," DePuy said. "As long as you have got a [Peter] Dawkins or a [Robert] Schweitzer advising. It's all well and good if you have men like these. But what if you have only got Major Glotz? He is not a Rhodes Scholar and he does not have a Ph.D. degree and a sky-high IQ. The institution, dammit, has its limitations."

It is an irony. Many of the older generals want to shy away from adventures in counterinsurgency, and many of the younger ones do not. It has little to do with the perception of the Communist threat; it has to do with the traditions of the Army. Burned in Vietnam, many of the senior men want to get back to the comfortable pre-insurgency mission—the protection of the United States. The younger men, looking for the action in the next decade, see themselves at command posts

in the Andes; some, not all. One of the bright young men of the Pentagon, a lieutenant colonel, says he would not touch MAOP with a ten-foot pole. "It's a nonprogram," he said, "and will do nothing for a man's career."

The older men are wary, none more so than the commander of Fort Bragg and XVIII Airborne Corps, Lieutenant General John J. Tolson III. Tolson is rugged and grandfatherly, and speaks in a soft Southern accent. He seemed to me to embody most, if not all, of the decent traditions of the Army, a man who has served in a lot of places and learned something from each one. In Vietnam, he had the reputation, as a division commander, of being careful with his men. Tolson is not at all sure of the utility of placing the Army in political/civil/military roles in foreign countries. Particularly underdeveloped countries.

"They sent me to Ethiopia in 1961," he said. "I was a brigadier general, and I figured it was a career-busting tour. I saw the Peace Corps in Ethiopia, and it was great and all that. But you know, we might have more to do in our own country, maybe we could use a few of those here at home. . . ."

"Until we get our own social structure straightened out, we are not going to be successful elsewhere. You know, my generation, we thought we were 'It.' But we've got young people who don't think so. This is a great young generation, they are *thinking*. But we are in a very precarious thing, we've got a heavy psychological price we are paying." Tolson meant the Army, and he went on:

"There is definitely a reaction against the Army. There are a lot of people worried about 'the military.' . . . I have established racial seminars here, and we have got to get on with the process. There are the same racial tensions in the Army as there are in society as a whole."

I asked Tolson about nation-building as an appropriate role for the Army.

"Well, based on my limited experience in Vietnam and Ethiopia, you don't want that to be military. You can't hack it that way. Look, we have got to improve our own society, not its quantity but the quality. Maybe . . . hell, maybe we could build a few dams or bridges here rather than in Latin America.

"The main mission of the Army is as a part of the defense team. Protecting the country, and that is second to nation-building or anything else."

The main mission of the Army. But they are thinking of the other possible missions, wondering about new forms of New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps camps and plans by which the Army would rebuild the United States. It is the only institution in the country that is capable of it (that is, with sufficient men and money),

¹He is so right. At Bragg, the psywar department is hopeless, a grab-bag of highly sophisticated instruments to, as they say, "use communications to influence the behavior of the target area." To that end, psyops operatives at Bragg are studying the world's religions, "group dynamics," and "the social system." It is sociology gone berserk. "Rumors," one of the psyops colonels said quite seriously, "the problem is how you utilize rumors."

and when the war has ended and the recriminations have begun, there the Army will be: well dressed up and no place to go. Talent to burn, and no match to light it with. A peacetime mission of high priority is not only desirable; from a professional officer's point of view, it is very nearly mandatory. And it might take some of the sting from the Vietnam postmortem. If the Army could build, rather than destroy . . .

It is a plan under consideration at highest levels, but at all the lower ones the eyes are on the main business: security. Incipient insurgencies everywhere, and how is the Army to deal with them unless it has the capability, the understanding? Aggressive Russians and unpredictable Chinese and their surrogates. So the Army must devise the doctrine and acquire the know-how. On the other side of Bragg from Tolson's office, the young MAOP students and Special Forces work at it. The Green Berets study Laotian and Haitian and Portuguese, and a dozen other languages. They are learning more about what it means to go "lean and mean," establish small camps in the mountains and work outwards, either with the government in power or with the insurgents, either way. The Special Forces A-Team: communications experts, demolition experts, medics, language officers, and quick killers. The A-team in the mountains,

and the MAOP man in the capital. Or in the future, MAOP men in the mountains, in the capital, and at the elbow of Henry Kissinger in the White House. The handbook: "*A major objective of U.S. policy is to thwart further Communist inroads into non-Communist areas by safeguarding and assisting the less-developed nations in fulfilling their aspirations to remain free to fashion ways of life independent from Communism or other external domination or control.*"

The civilians can't do it, Sam Wilson had said, and anyone who had observed Vietnam for any length of time would have to agree. Too loose, not disciplined enough—but most of all, no resources, no men or money or chain of command; no *doctrine*. That is what the Army has. It has all the money and all the talent, and what are you going to do with it? Let it go to waste? "Are you going to deny us the opportunity of furthering the objectives of American foreign policy?"

And lying back of all of it, a palpable presence, the notion that it could have been done in Vietnam. If we knew then what we know now, none of it need have happened. Oh, it was difficult, all right; no one is saying it was easy, and hindsight is always treacherous. But from the beginning, if you had set limits on what you expected from the Saigon government, if you had under-

"ONCE AN EAGLE"

Ask a soldier the name of the best book about the Army, and the odds are he will reply Once an Eagle, an 815-page novel written by Anton Myrer in 1968. One colonel told me it was the only good book on the Army, with the possible exception of The Red Badge of Courage and All Quiet on the Western Front. A synopsis of the plot tells a good deal about how a certain type of soldier sees himself and the institution.

Myrer's hero is an up-from-the-ranks Kansan named Sam Damon. He enlists in World War I as a private, ends World War II a major general, and is killed in Indochina on an intelligence mission for the Army. Army insiders insist that the book is basically a roman à clef, accurate as history, excellent as journalism, and devastating as sociology. Indeed, all of the parts are there: the army command structure, medals and ribbons, post life, blood and guts, pride and prejudice, staff men and field commanders, West Pointers and mustangs, gallantry and heroism, cowardice and stupidity, hook and crook. The characters are pat, and it is astonishing that central casting has not grasped the opportunity: George C. Scott as the brilliantly suave and ambitious general's aide who has troubles with his sex life (an uncommanding preference, in later years, for fellatio), Deborah Kerr

as the embittered (and finally redeemed) army brat of a wife, Martin Balsam the cowardly general, Burt Lancaster the sturdy colonel, Pat O'Brien the faithful sergeant. There are no roles for Dustin Hoffman. Black Jack Pershing puts in an appearance, and so does MacArthur, "Dugout Doug." But most of all there is Greg Peck/Damon, a man so pure of heart and instinct that he could only have been drawn from life. Damon wins the Medal of Honor, marries the general's daughter, thrashes the camp bully, frees the innocent Indian from the stockade, snatches victory from defeat on a dozen bloody occasions, all the time true to himself and loyal to the Army. It is the system, the army apparatus and its offspring, which holds Damon back (Peck/Damon goes to two stars, but Scott/Massengale goes to four), who try to humiliate him, who are ungrateful—and who prevail in the end. Damon dies and the Army survives and the appeal is clear: life is a struggle to maintain personal honor and individual courage against the stupidities and caprice of the organization. He who struggles attains a luster that nothing can dim—and what is war anyway but a hideous business in which the fight is to maintain life amid death, to place duty and honor ahead of everything else; duty, honor, country? Or so army officers have expressed it to me. That is, some of them have. A few have said that Once an Eagle is nonsense.

WJ

Women's liberation has come to the Army, and now wives are telling their husbands, one tour and no more; when the second tour comes around, it is Vietnam or me.

stood the politics of South Vietnam and therefore the strength of the revolution, if you had known the language and the customs, maybe then you would not have gone in at all. You see, they say, what the MAOP program may do is *prevent* future Vietnams, *prevent* American quagmires—and do this on the basis of the facts. If you can estimate the factors accurately, then you can make a rational judgment: no good saying this or that adventure is not in the American tradition, or beyond the capacities of the government in Washington; leave that sort of thing to the woolly-minded, historians or social scientists or journalists. You put a smart army officer in that country, *on the ground*, and . . . look, the MAOP man will have the tools to estimate the threat, the strength of the insurgents, the will of the defenders, so it will be a protection for Americans as well as an opportunity. Either do that, or surrender the battleground to the Communist enemy; either/or, no middle ground. But the point, as Lou Waple said, was that the MAOP man may look at the challenge and refuse it, declare the situation hopeless, beyond solution.

But when did an American army officer ever declare anything hopeless?

The Bragg program is infinitesimal by Pentagon standards, a budget of \$5 million for the Institute and the JFK Center (excluding the Special Forces brigades). MAOP costs about \$100,000 annually, very, very petty cash. Fly Flanagan had posited the obvious, that training men is a much less expensive proposition than buying all the new machines; and in the nineteen seventies, he was convinced, it was a question of men more than it was of machines. So the program at Bragg goes forward, watched closely by a few officials, some of whom are alarmed, but most of whom are not. At the Pentagon and elsewhere, the majority effort is concentrated on weapons and the structure of the institution, as the budget plunges and the Army melts into the background of society. A central concern now is the steady leak of talented officers, most of them young captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels. A study is under way to find the causes, but the most sensitive army officers already know them. They are four: the repeated Vietnam tours, the antimilitary atmosphere in the country, the low pay, and (for the younger men) the anachronistic spit-and-polish, the Mickey Mouse. Women's Liberation has come to the Army, and now wives are telling their husbands, one tour and no more; when the second tour comes around, it is Vietnam or me. This is true not only for the officer corps, but for the career noncom as well. Sergeant Gillis, the "lifer" interviewed

at Bragg, said he was puzzled: "These young guys can't seem to control their wives anymore, and the wives don't seem to understand that a soldier's job is to fight."¹

"I was going back for my third tour," the young airborne major said, "and my wife and I had it out, and I agreed, the hell with it. Your number is bound to come up sometime. It has to: percentages. I was in this business for good, but what with the goddamn public. What do they know about it? I decided I might as well go to work and make some money."

Or the retired lieutenant colonel, a Ph.D., largely self-educated, now a librarian in Kansas City because his career ended . . . why? Who knows? His friends, all regular army men, say he was a first-class combat leader and smart in the bargain. But he was old when he enlisted, and kept getting older, and finally he got the message: he would never make bird colonel. Rough, very abrasive, outspoken—too uneven a gem for the Army in the era of professional managers. So now he is a librarian, but those who know him well say that he would have been one of the best brigade or division commanders in the Army.

Your wife, I asked the young airborne major, apart from Vietnam, did she like the Army? Like army life, post life?

"No," he said. "She really didn't. I think she found it dull." The major shrugged, puzzled by it.

Major General John Norton's wife, the daughter of a colonel, had told me a little of the army life at Riley and Leavenworth in the nineteen twenties and thirties. It was a graceful life, almost sensuous, with polo ponies and tea in the afternoons and the large houses on post. You lived well, if you were a field-grade officer; it was not Greenwich or Grosse Pointe, but it was nice

¹ Potentially more explosive than any of it is the problem of the blacks, which I have not addressed in detail, and don't intend to. Only a black can write it now. The outlines are obvious, however. The blacks, many of them, do not feel a part of the Army any more than they feel a part of society in general. There are exceptions (see Part One, *October Atlantic*). The Army is integrated, but many blacks do not care to become officers, so most of the officers are white. About one percent of the officer corps is black. Blacks have carried a disproportionate share of the burden in South Vietnam, sustaining casualties out of all relation to their numbers—both in America and in the Army. They gravitate to the elite units such as the airborne, where they tend to make sergeant and stop. The black problem in the Army is not much different from the problem in American society, and the same results are evident: separatism, black nationalism, and rage. From the perspective of a professional soldier of either race, the prospect is a melancholy one because for men to fight well there must be common respect and affection. That is not present now. Not in America. Not in the Army.

"Calley never would have become an officer if we were not so short-handed. Why are we short-handed? Because the bastards at Harvard wouldn't fight."

enough, and the Army was respectable. Just before the war, some of those old colonels tried to get the horse cavalry reinstated. The Army had a charm, and an ease of manner about it; the conventions were good. The tours abroad were fun, the exotic places such as Nancy Shea described in a book called *The Army Wife*, published in 1941 and then as now something of a Bible for the professionals: "Dine on the porch or in the garden, if practicable. If the porch is screened, you will enjoy your meals wherever there is a cool spot and an attractive view. Serve the coolest foods you can imagine. If your imagination deserts you, then the next time you dine at the Manila Hotel, the Condado or the Washington Hotel, ask if you can take one of their menus . . ."

It was quiet and relaxed, as the country was. The civilians tended to snipe, but it didn't matter; the Army was like a family then. But the United States is different now, a volcanic economy, and the tensions everywhere. The kids and the blacks, Vietnam . . .

"When my girls were growing up, I had to tell them that because their father was an officer, that didn't make him different from the other people on the base," the general's wife said. "Now, because of the war and what you read and hear, I have to . . . *defend* who he is and what he does."

And at the bar of a Bachelor Officers' Quarters at Leavenworth, the men trickled in after a day at class, sat and stared sullenly at Walter Cronkite. Cronkite was talking about the war, and the picture leapt up off the screen—how many times have you seen it?—a burning hut and crying kid and dead gook. Some town that you couldn't even pronounce the name and a curly-headed TV reporter mourning the *gooks*, then back to Washington for a few more cracks against soldiers.

So the world penetrates the army base in a way that it didn't thirty years ago: There are directives to the senior officers to mingle with the civilians, to invite them to the base and accept return invitations; the ban on pictures in the society pages continues, but harmonious relations are important now. The life is less quiet and less graceful than it used to be, but for the young wife it is too quiet, separated as it is from the mainstream. Columbus, Georgia; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Killeen, Texas. And the quarters of a captain are less, very much less, than those of a colonel. Would you live in Killeen if you could help it?

General DePuy had said that with feeling running the way it was, the Army would have to draw its talent from the Midwest and the South and the Mountain States. But it is now clear that no part of America is further than five

or six years away from any other part. Berkeley in 1964 is Kent State in 1970, and while the senior officers shrug off the loss of ROTC programs, many of the serious-minded junior officers do not. There are still 281 ROTC chapters at American colleges and universities, and forty-one applications pending, but these are not the front-line schools. In 1970 three of those which were lost were Dartmouth, Boston University, and Harvard; three of those gained were Weber State College in Utah; Southern Oregon College; and East Central State College in Oklahoma. ROTC over the years has given the Army its leaven, broadened it with men whose perspectives were wider than West Point's and whose sense of the institution was drawn more from society than from the professional perspective of arms. More than that, there was a sheer practical reason: the Army needs more officers than West Point or OCS can supply. Even in a buttoned-down peacetime situation (some officials in the Pentagon are talking of a 750,000-man Army, post-Vietnam, a smaller army by 100,000 men than existed when Eisenhower left the presidency), the Army needs ROTC. But anyone who has been around the colleges and universities lately knows that ROTC is in trouble. In time, there will be trouble even at Weber State College.

The figures in February of 1970 were these: West Point supplied 5 percent of army officers, Officers Candidate School 33 percent, ROTC 41 percent, and direct commissions 15 percent. By summer of 1970, the Army had all but closed down OCS, doing everything it could to discourage men from entering. The officer corps is now far too large for the declining ranks. The Army is giving up its ROTC chapters without a struggle (figuring it would be a losing battle), and, if anything is certain this year, the Army will live to regret it. The problem is twofold: the most talented men are not entering the Army, and some of the best men already there are leaving it. But the Pentagon puts the best face on it, drawing comparisons to the wind-down of other wars. Given the embattled psychology of the professionals, many of them feel good riddance. William Westmoreland is apparently one of these: "You always expect it," he said. "The highly motivated officers are staying with us. They always do. Ike and Bradley did after World War II. Although many officers are resigning for perfectly legitimate reasons, the number resigning because they cannot stand the heat is considerably larger than usual."

Preliminary returns from a study of the West Point class of 1965 (the class which in 1970 is ending its last year of obligatory military service) support Westmoreland. Officials explain that they can dig through the 201 files of those who are resigning and find indications of unsuitability: "We will find unfavorable reports."

But it is a classic self-fulfilling analysis, and all but useless because the resignee, as often as not, leaves in the first place because of dissatisfaction with the system, and naturally his file would reflect that. Anyone who believes that the system is correct as it is now operating could derive considerable comfort from the statistics. A few senior officers have said privately that they would like to do away with the efficiency report but are at a loss (or say they are) to find a substitute, a better way to judge a man's capacities. How do you estimate talent? There are 46,000 field-grade officers in the U.S. Army, and can you know which ones are the standouts?

What the Army has truly not come to grips with is the recommendation for a professional army, an all-volunteer force. No one likes the idea, principally for philosophical reasons—"A bunch of mercenaries is not in the American tradition," one senior general said, "and the strength of the Army is its citizen character."¹ Beyond that, both military and civilian officials at the Department of the Army contend that the quality of enlistee would not be high enough to operate the machines of the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties. By this analysis, the Army must have a civilian draft in order to secure men bright enough to work the gear, to drive the Sheridans and service the Shillelughs and program the computers and read the maps. Thomas S. Gates, the chairman of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Force, estimated that it would cost \$3.5 billion for a two-and-a-half-million-man force; the Pentagon strongly disagrees, and puts the figure at twice that. Regular officers do not like to contemplate an army which would be mostly black, mostly uneducated, and—by its nature, they say—separated from society. Bad, bad, bad, one general said, shaking his head and summoning recollections of American valor at Omaha Beach and Argonne. It is contended that if the draft calls went down to 5000 a month, the Army would be able to secure the men it needed. By General DePuy's estimate, there will be enough of these outside the Eastern and Western seaboard. But take all the facts away, and the objection is basically rooted in a soldier's reading of American history: volunteers or mercenaries or what-

¹ As a matter of fact, the all-volunteer army *is* in the American tradition. There has been conscription only in times of clear danger: the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. Between the wars, the Army all but disbanded, accepting only volunteers. What is different now is that, war or no war, the nation's standing army is very large, too large to rely on volunteers alone. The military budget has continued to grow, war or no war, or, in the case of Vietnam, undeclared war. But still, mercenaries—or the euphemism, volunteers—do not seem in the American grain. One suspects, again, that it is the fascination with innocence—of a certain kind.

ever you want to call them are simply not in the tradition of the country. America's military men do not like to think of themselves as hired guns. And no good arguing, as the President's Commission did, that policemen, firemen, and U.S. marshals are volunteers. They don't have to fight in wars, at the direction of the state; on foreign soil, pursuing the national destiny.

So the professional soldier tends to dismiss the professional army. The real problem, he says, is "the tiger problem." That is the phrase of a lieutenant colonel now analyzing the data from studies of men who left the Army. "How do you get an innovative, aggressive man through the middle management of the Army where life can be very, very dull?" It is difficult for a man to take a year or eighteen months at Fort Hood without cracking in the process, without saying the hell with it and resigning. The examples are everywhere: the young (and, by all accounts, brilliant) army scientist and inventor who was sent as an adviser to the Vietnamese military academy, the tough and aggressive battalion commander sent to staff, the colonel "selected for retention in grade" as a not-so oblique putdown because he spent so much time working for civilians in Saigon. Officials at the Department of the Army concede that many of those who leave blame the organization. Other resignees slip it, reporting only that they have "a different career goal." (It is worth mentioning that in 1970 a number of those who resigned had serious second thoughts; life on the outside, in a period of economic recession, proved more difficult than advertised.)

It's impossible to know whether My Lai accelerated the resignations. It was common knowledge in Vietnam that men coming from Officers Candidate School (Lieutenant Calley was an OCS man) were not the Army's best quality. One reaction to the Calleys and Medinas was to blame middle-class American youth, chiefly the student protesters. The logic is this: if the most talented and upright members of the society will not fight in time of war, it leaves leadership in the hands of people like Calley. One senior officer said with some heat: "Calley never would have become an officer if we were not so short-handed. Why are we short-handed? Because the bastards at Harvard [Harvard is shorthand for any student who refuses the war] wouldn't fight, wouldn't step up to their responsibilities. They got their deferments, and left the war to the least competent people. They are the ones to blame. . . ." The best young Americans were evading the draft, which left the management of the war to the worst; it is an argument with hypnotic appeal to professional soldiers.

These matters worry the Army, and worry it more than senior men are prepared to admit (it should come as no surprise that the Department of the Army has commissioned a study on what makes a hero). But the

central preoccupation now is money: how to make it stretch, what to choose, what will fit the requirements in 1975 or 1980. The days of geometric progression are over. The Army's budget was \$3.9 billion in 1950, \$9.3 billion in 1960, and \$24.4 billion in 1970. For probably the first time in American history, the military establishment faces a genuine necessity for choice. The budget is going down, and everyone knows it, but what has happened in the Army is precisely what has happened in American industry, a technological revolution out of control: in Toffler's phrase, "future shock." The problem is both interservice—that is, the classic struggle among the Navy's carriers, the Air Force's planes, and the Army's infantry—and, for the Army itself, interbranch. There appears to be almost no one who cultivates detachment and introspection: armored officers want tanks, the infantry wants helicopters, the signal corps wants laser beams. The Army is an institution of adversaries, and the prejudice of the branch carries straight to the top—a "general officer" is that in name only. But the general staff has apparently made its choice, and it is probably no accident that the choice is one in which all branches will share. It is STANO—surveillance, target acquisition, and night observation. More broadly, it is what Westmoreland once called "the automated battlefield," and its premises proceed directly from the Vietnam experience.

Or, if you will, the Vietnam effect. There are several of them, but the one most carefully considered in the Pentagon is the extraordinary waste on the battlefield. Vietnam is simply not cost-effective, and the problem there, as they see it, is that weaponry is adequate but the means of finding the enemy are not. One heard it a thousand times in Vietnam: *If we can only find the little bastard, we can kill him, but half the time we don't find him; and sometimes we find him and don't know it.* The lunatic artillery strategy, called in Vietnam "harassment and interdiction," is illustrative of the dilemma: H&I fire was directed indiscriminately at trails, "suspected troop concentrations," and "suspected enemy base camps." In one year, the Army fired more than one million rounds of artillery in H&I (at \$100-plus a round); surely somewhere there is a classified document reporting on the effectiveness. Whatever that document says, the men in the field were skeptical, as anyone with a sense of logic and probability would be. The Americans in Vietnam were faced with the luxury of absolute weapons superiority—air, artillery, heavy weapons—and, thanks to the helicopters, absolute mobility. But they were unable to score. Clearly, the only reason could be a failure to find the enemy. There could be no other reason, at least there could be none if you regarded the war as strictly a military operation, "an engi-

neering problem." If you could devise a way to find the Communist, then you could fix him; and having fixed him, then you could kill him. STANO.

The revolutions are basically two, miniaturization and computation. The Army is developing sensors that can track a column of men and indicate whether or not they carry weapons. They are working on chemical detectors, sound detectors, heat detectors, and light detectors. Under development now is infra-red radar, "discreet and accurate," as the planners describe it; magnetic devices, people-sniffing devices. One army colonel in ACSFOR sees a future in which a platoon of men is little more than a reconnaissance force, each man with individual radar meant to find and fix the enemy. Individual impulses are fed back to a computer at the command post, and the computer tells the artillery where to fire. In its finest flower, the infantryman need no longer carry a weapon; all the fighting will be done by remote control, and be done twenty-four hours a day. The dispatch didn't appear in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, but it appeared in the *Killeen Daily Telegram*, inserted on page one so as not to alarm the natives. There were tests being conducted at Fort Hood, the army news release said:

The sky will glow every ten minutes for approximately three minutes every night, all night long. The device being used to cause this will be an airborne searchlight, a light with the brightness of 1.9 million candlepower. The lights will be mounted on helicopters and will be turned on at altitudes of 2,500 to 10,000 feet. According to Major Raymond G. Andrews at Project MASSTER, there is absolutely no danger involved. However, Andrews cautions advisers [sic] not to stare directly into the light as this might cause some discomfort, as would staring into the sun.

Along with the Vietnam effect, or really part of it, is what the Army identifies as the population explosion. Bluntly put, the Army cannot destroy the countryside as it did in France or as it is doing in Vietnam. A staff man in the Pentagon said, "But the commander has got to go into the city much more often than he had to do in the past, because there are more cities and more people. So you have got to discriminate in how much firepower you use, and where you use it." The prospects are dazzling. "If you go into a city, can you target *one man*? Or burn down *one house*? There are very stringent ground instructions on soldiers now, and these will become more stringent."

The computerized command post, as Cyrus Vance observed, has been kicking around for a decade. But it

It is the final depersonalization of warfare, the ultimate separation of the killer from the killed.

now seems technologically feasible. It seems feasible now to commence to develop systems which will eliminate human error. At I-CAS (Institute for Combined Arms Studies) at Leavenworth they are working on it, thinking about a progression of computers: a small one on a man's back, a little larger one for the platoon leader, larger still at the company CP, and still larger at battalion and brigade and division. All of these linked to one another, so programmed as to eliminate trivia along the way. And the computers linked to the big guns and to the aircraft, so once the target is acquired the machinery capable of destroying it can be zeroed in. And none of it touched by human hands.

The problems are enormous, not least among them the expense in a period of budget cuts (no one in the Army seems seized by the irony). Second, as Colonel Ireland observed in connection with the Sheridan, is maintenance. At Leavenworth, they speak of "ruggedizing" the equipment. The Pentagon colonel preferred the phrase, "make it idiot-proof." But at both locations, men are worrying about the talent needed to operate such sophisticated gear. "The battalion commander of the future better damn well know ADP [automatic data processing]," one soldier-scientist said. The computer is essential because, with the new devices, information will overwhelm the commanders. To a degree, that has already happened with captured enemy documents in Vietnam. It will require a computer to separate wheat from chaff. Already the computer is calculating logistics, both in supply and in men, a process which has resulted in a man "in the pipeline" (that is, from fort to field, or vice versa) only forty-eight hours, compared with two or three weeks in World War II.

Regression analysis, they say. *Functionalize the threat*. I have had it explained to me, but I am not certain what it means. It appears to mean a method of analyzing precisely, by function, the nature of the various threats presented to America. In order to diversify the Army (if that is the word), there are a number of proposals which would do away with either the corps command or the division command or both. Lieutenant General George Forsythe, now the head of the Army Combat Developments Command, would like to break down the Army into brigades. By this theory, the division at 15,000 men is an inefficient instrument; much better to organize in brigades, each independently targettable (as they say about the MIRV missile), and if the time comes to move in a division formation, simply put a tactical commander at its head. They are thinking, too, of new definitions—is riverine warfare a function of the Army or the Navy? Is "the beach" or "the beach-head" five hundred yards or five miles? And, crucially, what of the helicopter? Hugely expensive, successful in Vietnam, but how successful in Europe? Or the Sahara?

Is it best as a troop carrier, or is it really an airborne tank? Or both? And how vulnerable, in a combat environment where the enemy is both more ubiquitous and better armed than in Vietnam? Helicopter partisans are not unduly concerned with attacks on their machine, because its STANO uses are perfectly obvious. Ditto the Sheridan tank and the APC, which can look like a computer when the scientists are finished touching it up.

"The crunch has never been greater," said the army colonel. "Anything that looks promising, we investigate. And then we investigate it some more. We are getting into it in the early stages, testing for mobility, fire control—*field testing*, that is; we are not going straight to procurement, because that is what costs the money."

Much of the testing is being conducted at Fort Hood, along the lines suggested in the following document. One hesitates to summarize it. Better to read it in full. (MASSTER stands for Mobile Army Sensor Systems Test and Evaluation Resources.)

STANO-MASSTER DECATHLON

Take the most explosive technology (electronics);

Combine it with experimentation in the most sensitive combat functions (intelligence and control);

And faced with the greatest proliferation of new R&D material;

Test and evaluate this new material, along with new concepts, with precision adequate to measure combat effectiveness (benefits vs. burdens);

And systematically document and test the land combat process;

And drastically improve the design and procedures of the command post;

And conduct, for the first time, integrated (CDC, AMC, CONARC, ASA) tests with integrated inputs and integrated outputs;

And test critical items, particularly DCPG itself, in record time—with the equipment on hand sixty days or less;

And complete deployment within the same sixty-day period.

And, finally, recruit and assemble the necessary test organization in face of rapidly declining army, manpower, budget and other resources.

Without detailing every new weapon in the arsenal, it is clear where this is leading. It is the final depersonalization of warfare, the ultimate separation of the killer from the killed. It is a mechanization of responsibility as well, taking judgment further and further from the mind, and therefore the ethics, of men. Some fine old quotations also go into limbo: "It is well that war is so terrible," Robert E. Lee said, "lest men grow too fond of it." It is the information explosion, they will tell you,

communications. "We can do away with wire, and use an electromagnetic spectrum instead. The computers can talk to the sensors, and vice versa." One of the wonders of it all is the breakthrough in storage of energy; no problem with that now, they say; and the computers acquire the ability of infantrymen. The words are precision and discretion, which a computer can do better than a man—how can that be denied? The man can't assimilate the information that the computers are feeding him. The information is too unwieldy, there is too much of it, from too many different perspectives. And anyway, it is *war*, and you do what you must in a war.

Hopelessly out of touch, this journalist, but he asked the colonel if he really wanted to give the machines that kind of authority? What kind of men do you get to run them?

A fatherly denial, stern and direct: the computer will never replace the man. It still depends on the man's judgment.

Pointless to pursue it further. One can see where it springs from, this desperation of soldiers to *know what is happening*. War: so imprecise, confused, lunatic. And so much at stake. Bring a logic to the asylum, something that can be made sense of. A fact that will last from today to tomorrow.

In November of 1967, William Westmoreland returned from the war zone. He conferred with Lyndon Johnson, and later with the press. It was part of the Administration's offensive to convince the public that the war was going well, on its way to being won, in fact; the public was not unreceptive to this view. The evidence was plausible, as Westmoreland told the journalists at the Pentagon on the twenty-second of November:

Question: General, you mentioned earlier that 45 percent of the North Vietnamese VC main force units are combat-ineffective . . .

Westmoreland: This is according to the assessment by my intelligence officers.

Question: Could you give us some examples of how this shows up in the battlefield, sir, because we don't see that in news reports. The news reports don't indicate this shows up—how ineffectiveness shows up on the battlefield. We don't see it in the reports we get back here.

Westmoreland: Well, you haven't heard of any victories that they've won, have you?

Question: No. But they seem to do quite well on defense.

Westmoreland: And you don't—they don't run away?

Question: They don't seem to.

Westmoreland: Well, sometimes we try to make it

possible so that they cannot run away; that's one of the objects of the exercise. [Laughter] So that we can use our firepower against them. Well, how do we get this information? We get it from interrogation of prisoners, from defectors, from captured documents. The order-of-battle people keep detailed information on every one of these main force units. Now, this can change very rapidly, I mean a unit could be ineffective because it only has half of its authorized men, but he could get in a packet of replacements from the North and after those replacements had been assimilated it could be effective again. So this is a fluctuating matter.

Question: That also includes the units that are licking their wounds and rebuilding again.

Westmoreland: Yes, that's right. . . .

Question: You said that on this trip that it's conceivable to you that within two years or less we could begin to phase down the war. Those of us who have to cover other aspects of Washington wonder whether it's conceivable to you that within a year, say, by next November, we could . . .

[Laughter]

Question: . . . phase out . . .

[Laughter]

Westmoreland: I'm not inclined to change my language.

[Laughter]

Question: Let me clear up one point. You don't think that the battle of Dakto is the beginning of the end of anything . . . for the enemy . . .

Westmoreland: I think it's the beginning of a great defeat for the enemy.

Question: Thank you, general.

Two points: the general was accurate that the war, or at least the American side of it, would begin to "phase down" within two years. But sixty-nine days after the press conference at which he said that enemy main force units were 45 percent ineffective, the Viet Cong struck at Tet. It hit every provincial capital in South Vietnam, more than half the district capitals, seized the American Embassy for twelve hours, and held the city of Hué for twenty-two days. The American public never recovered, and from that point on, the Vietnam War was an endgame.

THE COLONEL

Southgate, California, lies to the south and west of Los Angeles International Airport, out Century Boulevard past Watts. That's where the colonel was now, in Southgate, on a thirty-day leave from Vietnam. The kids were underfoot all

day long in the bungalow which sat in a cul-de-sac off one of the main roads; the street itself was quiet, but two blocks away there were gas stations and drive-ins and small neighborhood taverns. It was a place where people bought houses for two or three years, and then moved on. In America seven days, the colonel was unable to adjust.

He was fighting the war every day in his memory, not talking about it very much with his wife, who has a job now and three children to raise when she is not at work at the hospital, nursing. The colonel's parents died when he was three, and he joined the Merchant Marine when he was fourteen; three years later he joined the Army, so in one form or another the military has been his home, what the Spanish call a *querencia*, for all his adolescent and adult life. That is what he thinks about at home now in the evenings: the Army. Drinking a scotch, kneading his fist into his palm, he thinks about the service, and the silence is broken only by the big jets flying low in the smog, approaching LAX. He eases back in the Barca-Lounger, legs atilt, and looks at the design over the fireplace. It is only a week before Christmas, and above the mantel is hung an odd arrow-shaped apparatus with the word **HARDCORE** set in relief in the middle. Now that was funny. The men of the battalion had tried to figure out ways of telling the enemy who they were, what unit it was tormenting them. When they killed a gook, they wanted the gook's comrades to know who had done it. At first they stuffed division patches into the mouths of the dead. Then one of the sergeants, what a stud that one was, got the idea of branding the bastards; brand them on their chests. So a cumshaw artist in the battalion got together some solder and made **HARDCORE**, which was the battalion motto; the sergeant had showed it to the colonel, and the colonel had laughed and said, No babe, it's too goddamn big to lug around just to brand some gook, and where are you going to get the fire to heat it up? So the men went back to division patches in the mouths of the dead. Now the colonel was sitting in the chair and grinning, because atop the branding iron his wife had placed a white porcelain angel of mercy.

The boy is five and the girls eight and ten, wonderful-looking kids, especially the boy, very bright-eyed and at odds with all the women in the family, the ones who dominate his life while his dad is away at the war. The colonel worries a little about the boy, about the females running his life. It's not good for a kid to grow up surrounded by women. And his friends, the old army friends, are not there because Southgate is not an army town. It is a suburb like the other Los Angeles suburbs, classless and faceless, a thin gray line of houses retreating off the main streets. His wife took the family there

while the colonel was in Vietnam. His wife grew up in Los Angeles, and her mother lives there still; so there is a sense of place, for the wife anyway, a sense of familiar things and people. Her husband, since he has been at war, is a little less familiar.

He is an expert in the art of small-unit infantry tactics, and with a seventh-grade education as a base, has managed to read and understand Hannibal and Clausewitz, and, lately, all the books of Bernard Fall. He told her a little sheepishly that it's *his thing*, using the vernacular with a smile because doing your thing reminded him of hippies; flower children, and here he was a colonel of infantry. I'm doing my thing, killing gooks.

"It's what I'm good at," he said.

"Yes," she said, because there wasn't anything else to say. But she does not understand the romance of small-unit maneuvers, squad leaders and point men and the mike force out in front and the mortars to the rear. Just now she's very involved with her job, and becoming someone herself. The colonel has as much interest in the subtleties of nursing as she has in the subtleties of commanding a battalion.

She has never been caught up in the Army the way other officers' wives have. Perhaps that is because the colonel is not a West Point man, and pointedly avoids the sort of polish that separates officers and gentlemen. With a friend late at night, the colonel falls to talking of life on an army base—the army brats and their army brat wives, the ass-kissing, the relentlessness of the system. They have always been mavericks, these two. He told her very early on, Don't bother to politic for me; I'll make it on my own or not at all. He didn't need a woman to do it for him, and truth to tell, when women meddled they did more harm than good anyway. *When we make major*, that captain's wife at Campbell had said.

His wife smiled a little at that, and moved to go into the kitchen to fetch the ice. She enjoyed the conversation, reminiscing about life as a captain at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and as a major at other bases in other states.

"Don't talk about that now. Talk about something else while I'm gone," she said. "Talk about the Army," she said and walked into the kitchen.

She means, talk about the war; talk about assaulting a hill in South Vietnam or about **HARDCORE** or about the body count or the ARVN officer corps. She does not understand the war and is bored by it, and appalled by the killing. He has been away two of the past three years, three of the past five, now with one unit, now with another, at staff and at corps, but never in Saigon. He had successfully avoided Saigon because he had friends, and a truly outstanding record; his superiors permitted him to get away with it. An angry Creighton

"He bought some time, and that's what it's all about."

Abrams took the colonel's battalion command away from him after his fourth wound in Vietnam; Abrams didn't want him dead, and so moved him to corps, where he wouldn't get shot at. That is where the colonel will return, at the end of the thirty-day leave. He is thinking now about extending again. What the hell, the only war we've got; and laughing at the old, the very old, joke, saying it in parody of the number of times he has heard it before.

The colonel's wife succeeded in her instructions, and when she returns with the ice the two men are back talking about Vietnam, about the son-of-a-bitch brigade commander who didn't give a damn about lives, only his own reputation, and some of the stupidities and screwups of the war. That reminiscence leads to another, and as his wife sits and listens, the colonel and his friend plunge back into the detritus of memory. It centers on battles. War stories.

"We killed one hundred and eight in that one"—he names the day, and the name of the captain who commanded the company—"and two thousand, five hundred and forty-eight in four months."

"Well, there must have been a hell of a lot of enemy there for you to kill two thousand men," the friend says, not really believing the statistics. "Christ, that is supposed to be a place where the pacification . . ."

"Twenty-five hundred," the colonel says, correcting the figure.

"Oh, right."

"Not two thousand. Two thousand, five hundred and forty-eight."

His memory is phenomenal, total recall of events in Korea twenty years ago, or six months ago in the Delta of South Vietnam. He can remember the date and the time of day, the name of the operation, and where it took place. He can recall the disposition of his men, and who had the point.

"OK," he'd said. "Aguda. The story of Aguda. March thirty-one, nineteen fifty-one. It was a rocky goddamned hill, and we had to stack up stones and dig into the face of the hill for protection. The enemy was at the top, and, hell, it wasn't like Vietnam, where you can call in all that good air and artillery to blast the bastards off of it. 'OK, babe, you've got your six rounds of artillery,' was all they told me at battalion. *Six rounds*. The company was no damned good to us, a platoon had to do it all. To get to the top of the hill, and get those people off of it. Well, we did it. We got a small foothold, a fingerhold really, one, just one, ridge. It was real bad.

"Now, about Aguda. It's this premonition thing. Aguda had been wounded and got back the day before wearing regular boots, not the shoepacks that we had for the cold. God, you don't know what cold is until you have been in Korea in February and March. I told

him to get the shoepacks and get them on, but I was really fencing around with him, you know, to find out if that wound had affected him. You never know with guys, what it does to them. I told him that he'd have to have the shoepacks. 'I'm not going to be around here long enough to need them,' Aguda said.

"I didn't think much about that, although in retrospect it's pretty obvious I should have. But I didn't. Anyway, it was Aguda and I on the fingerhold of this damn hill. And Aguda (James Aguda, I think his name was; he was Hawaiian) had a B.A.R.—wonderful weapon, B.A.R. And the son of a bitch stands up. He stands up with the B.A.R. and takes the enemy as they're coming at us."

The colonel is up out of his seat now, and standing in the middle of the room, legs set wide-apart, hefting an imaginary Browning Automatic Rifle in his hands. The colonel is short, no more than five-nine, but husky with forearms like bowling pins. He is crouching in the middle of the room, his arms bent with the weight of the gun, his fingers jerking and clawing for the trigger, aiming the barrel, then jamming an imaginary clip into the breech.

"Christ, and while he's shooting at them I can see him getting it. *I can see it*. I'm yelling at him, for crissakes, Aguda, get down, and two slugs are hitting him, one in the leg and the other in the arm"—the colonel bangs the flat of his hand on his thigh, and wrenches his shoulder back—"and two more in the legs, and he's shooting like hell and finally he takes one in the chest and that swings him around and he drops and he's dead. KIA. But look: he put down effective fire. Down there. *He bought some time*, and that's what it's all about."

The colonel paused. "But there's a funny-sad aspect to it, too." He is speaking more slowly and quietly now. "We put him in for the Medal of Honor, you know. He should have had it, anyone can see that. But none of us could *write*. You should have seen those letters we wrote. Pathetic. 'James Aguda saved our ass. He shot a lot of gooks.' That's what those letters were like, and up at division some smart-ass captain reads them and thinks, So what. So he fired his weapon and killed some people. That's what you're supposed to do in a war. That's the name of the game." The colonel sighed, shaking his head. "We couldn't write, that was the fact. So Aguda didn't get the Medal of Honor. He got a bronze star."

The colonel's wife had talked a little about the Army, saying that the period in Kentucky was fine, before the war and all the separations. There was a misconception somehow that army life was one big scramble to keep up with the Joneses, and it wasn't true. Everyone knew what everyone made. It was there on the pay envelope.

A lieutenant made \$577 a month, a captain \$870, a major \$901, a lieutenant colonel \$971, and a colonel \$1001, and it could go higher than that depending on the length of service. The general's wife can drive a Ford and you can drive a Cadillac, and if you drive a Cadillac everyone on the base knows you're eating beans for dinner. Unless your parents have money. There were a few of those, *are* a few of those, on every base.

The colonel and his wife had read *The Organization Man* with amusement, and concluded that life in an American corporation and its adjunct, the suburb, was more confining than military life ever could be. But yet, it was true when they lived in Kentucky—when people came over for dinner there were none of higher or lower rank. If you were a captain, your friends were captains. Sometimes there was an awkward moment at large receptions when the wife of a captain would call a colonel by his first name, and her husband would call him by rank or, more frequently, *sir*. Well, really, that happened all the time.

Then the colonel's wife said:

"They ought to do something about the promotions, though. They are all published in the *Army Times*, and everyone reads them at once, for the first time. You have only got ten minutes to compose yourself and walk into the office and congratulate a man you probably hate for being on the 5 percent list, or for a promotion ahead of time." She was talking of what a man would have to do. "The trouble is, everybody knows everything. Your life is an open book. There's really no . . . I guess it's privacy. They ought to send individual messages, and give a man time to compose himself."

The colonel was nodding at that, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Now, back in Southgate, he was worrying the war again. Whatever defects the institution had, the solutions would have to come from others, those higher up than he. The colonel is not an introspective man, but he is reflective. He knows what he has to do. He does not visit hospitals like other commanders, on the theory that it would, after a time, become impossible for him to order men into battle if he were forced to view the results. There is no anomaly: He did not declare the war, nor is he hired to stop it. He is hired to fight it, which he tries to do with maximum effect. In the Korean War the colonel, then a sergeant, killed more than 100 men, and then at some point—he mentioned a figure like 138 or 143—he stopped counting. But he has been at this war a long time, longer than Korea, and what he sees now is bungling. He speaks scornfully of the Army as "the industry," sounding oddly like a movie producer when he says it, and is quick to pronounce Vietnam a misconceived adventure.

No one understood it then, and very few understand it now. The problem stems from the kind of army they have made, an army of managers and technicians, data processors, not fighters. No one read Bernard Fall and General Giap. Who read *People's War, People's Army*? No one knew what a guerrilla war was all about. They did not understand small-unit tactics, did not comprehend the guerrilla apparatus as a huge tree, with the main forces the lush foliage on top, but the real strength the Communist political structure at the roots. Chop off the foliage and it quickly grows back; the guerrilla must be denied his roots, which is to say the people. It might have been done right away, with small and mobile counter guerrilla forces. Might have, but wasn't.

The colonel thought about quitting the Army eighteen months before, but didn't. He probably never would. He is one of those that Westmoreland calls motivated. Anyway, the chance to win the war had been lost, and a hell of a lot of good men dead . . .

"But what about the nature of the war?"

"That's what I mean," the colonel said.

"No, no. I mean the fact that the war was against American traditions. I mean it was a *bad* war."

"Yeah, we were on the wrong side. But it could have been won."

"OK, forget that for a moment. Can you win a war, *should* you win a war, that's fundamentally. . ."

"I don't know about that," the colonel said. "We were in it, and I had to fight it."

. . . good men are dead. Any war always claims the best men an army has, the colonel said, because they are the studs, the chargers, the can-do boys, the ones with spirit and guts and the willingness to do what needs to be done. The others, the one-year tourists, they tend to get back OK. They tend to survive. Christ, and *for what*? All the dead, and for what? There are dead men because there were too many dumb general officers who didn't take the time to find out about the enemy. "Do you remember that stupid son of a bitch commander who said, 'I Have Entered The Iron Triangle And The Iron Triangle Is No More'? What kind of phony bullshit is that?"

His feelings so mixed and conflicting, the colonel tries to find the villains. It was the Army's job, and the Army botched it. The generals, and the press, which spent too much time covering the periphery and not describing the manner of the war. The manner in which the infantry fought it. Well, give him his due: Westy had a tough goddamned job, none tougher. But the war was the Army's to fight. Hell, you had to stop Communism somewhere.

"I guess I just like war," he said finally. "I like the comradeship. Adversity brings out the best in men. I believe that. I really believe it."

He knows, and his wife knows, that he is more at home at Dakto than in Southgate. He can laugh at the **HARDCORE** branding iron the way other men laugh at a remembered joke at the circus, when they were kids. The bugle in the morning, the starched fatigues, with just the nametag and U.S. Army and the three patches, CIB, paratroopers, and ranger. Nothing more than that. And a battalion command. You could do so goddamned much with a battalion of men; at division there were too many troops, and too much administration, and you had to be some kind of manager. But a battalion, six hundred guys; if you maneuvered six hundred men, you could do goddamned near anything with them. And if they were really good, volunteers, *airborne*; Christ . . .

What I wanted to do was take that battalion and mold it just like I would a piece of clay, take those kids and make them into the best fighting force that I could. The best in the country. And, by God, I made it go. It ended up being the best battalion in the country. No question about it. Well, now I'm going to study Latin American affairs. That's where it's going next, because the bastards think they can win it all now. Yessir, Latin America. COMUSMACL.

There was time for just one more war story, "a cute tragic story," this one about the Korean War and an infantryman named DeBore. DeBore was the worst trooper in the platoon, a slacker and an expert on sick call. "He was not one of us," the colonel said. "He was a coward. He admitted it, and we hated him for it. We all hated him, and he was an outcast. He had a sixth sense, that DeBore did. He was never in a major fire fight because he always managed to anticipate them and go on sick call. We had a joke about him. 'Out of the dark, dreary jungle came the call of the DeBore bird: *Sickcall, sickcall, sickcall.*' Anyway, this was February fifth, nineteen fifty-one, in the vicinity of Operation Killer, that thing that Ridgeway ginned up; it was a

dark and overcast day, and DeBore had got it right again, showed up on sick call and, hell, I had to let him go. We were going to pull out on an operation, but the day was so bad that we didn't move. It was too dark for the tac air, so we stayed where we were. Next day, DeBore returned, thinking we had left, and so he was forced to go with us. We ended up getting into a terrible fight; I took eight dead and about twenty wounded, and we'd regrouped around some armor, and I looked out onto the ice of a pond we were near, and there was a trooper and I knew it was DeBore. Have you ever heard slugs ricochet off ice?

"Well, these slugs were going everywhere, but I got out next to the son of a bitch, and he'd bought the farm real bad. A gut wound, blood all over—but he was conscious, so I gave him the old business, Come on, let's go, you're gonna be all right. Well, DeBore, this son of a bitch, looked up at me just as cool as you want. He had this real nice smile on his face, and said, 'Hey, Sarge, don't bother. Get your ass out of here. You're gonna get greased yourself. I just shit my pants. Man, I'm going.' And he died. Just like that. So nice."

The colonel paused for a second, and said, "When I told the guys about it. . ." He stopped again, and put his head down. "It's kinda sad. It got to me." He pushed his lips together and didn't say anything for a full minute.

"Well, after that he was treated with dignity. He . . . DeBore was one of the . . . heroes. You talked about the giants, the great men of the platoon, and DeBore was one of them."

The colonel was up now and standing, the tears streaming down his cheeks. He shook his head, and murmured something. He said, "It happens to you sometimes." He turned to one side to look out the window. Then he brightened and poured another drink. In thirty minutes DeBore was forgotten, and in three weeks the colonel was back in Vietnam. □

BURNING THE COUCH

A Story by L. Woiwode

They are burning the couch. Blue flames burn low over the cotton wadding, and black whorls of smoke ascend from the cushions and climb above their heads into the light-blue sky of June.

Tim, tall and skinny, nearly six feet at the age of sixteen, does a happy tap dance on the bare dirt of the backyard and punches Charles on the shoulder, and Charles, who has just completed his sophomore year of college (where he acts in the theater), and who has become extremely self-conscious about his voice and appearance and is growing a mustache and long hair to disguise his height of five feet six, thinks, When am I ever going to grow like him, and socks Tim hard.

Tim laughs, Charles produces a stage grin that resembles a grimace, and they turn back to the couch. Ever since they reached the age of reason they've wanted to burn this thing. It is—was, it's going—the ugliest piece of furniture the Neumillers own (a notable distinction in their motherless household where most of the furnishings, abused by five children over the years, have come to look like scattered wreckage), a nubbly, waste-colored-maroon-brown monstrosity that dates from their parents' marriage and has followed them across half the continent, move after move, appearing each time in the most conspicuous position in the living room.

Its wooden arms are loose and can be lifted up like alligator jaws, its seat cover is worn through to the cotton wadding, which is worn through to the springs—half of which have snapped in the last few years and have to be covered with layers and layers

of throw rugs to keep them from flesh—and the mechanism that once enabled it to convert into a double bed has collapsed, so it has to be shoved against a wall and its front legs shimmed to keep it from sliding forward and leaving you lying when you sit in it.

Something—a spring?—explodes in its interior, and they cheer.

Throughout adolescence and most of their childhood they were embarrassed to bring friends into the house because they knew it was sitting there. If possible, they kept them out of its room or hurried them past it with engaging conversation and left by another door. For the occasions when a guest had to confront it directly, they'd developed a patter:

Have a seat if you'd like to be goosed.

Once I hit the right combination of springs and had to be picked off the ceiling.

My grandma made those rugs—aren't they pretty? I don't know what that is underneath them.

That thing has to be assembled before you can sit in it. Pick your style.

This morning, as they were eating breakfast, their father and older brother, Jerome, had started off for work when their father, who'd begun dating a widow a few months before, suddenly reappeared in the kitchen, as though he'd just noticed the horror, handed them a check for three hundred dollars, and said, "For God's sake, go get some new furniture."

They whistled and applauded as they used to at movies when the hero appeared ("Wait! What about the old stuff?" "I don't care what you do with it.



Burn it if you want." *He* said it), and then borrowed a pickup from one of their uncles in Pettibone and parked at the rear entrance of a furniture store in Pekin and picked out, first, an Early American couch. Then, two maple end tables, a swivel chair of white Naugahyde, a three-foot lamp with a linen shade and an oatmeal-colored base, and ran out of money. As they were loading it all into the pickup with nervousness and delight, laughing at the looks of the salesman, laughing at themselves (as they later laughed when they waddled across the backyard with the weight of the antiquated thing between them), a friend of their father's passed them in the alley, and said, "Looks like somebody's getting married."

Ha!

It was gasoline they got it going with, and now Tim, who had disappeared for a few minutes, returns from the house on a run with a large can of lighter fluid and touches up some spots that seem reluctant to burn.

Charles steps back and checks the sky again (for a while it looked like rain, and they haven't unloaded the new furniture yet), and sees Bill Heininger, their neighbor across the alley, leaning on his lath fence, staring at them. Being seen, Bill Heininger, an elderly man who was once an egg-candler and is now the town constable, walks over with his hands in his pockets. He stares at the couch for a long time, looks at Charles, Tim, stares at the couch again for even longer.

"What are you doing?"

"Burning our couch."

"Martin, your dad, know it?"

"Sure."

He stares, he stares. Will he ask them to put it out?

"I noticed the smoke."

"Oh."

"Sure makes a lot of smoke."

"Yeah."

"Terrific heat, too. Just terrific."

"Uh-huh."

Soon, he walks off without having learned what he wants to learn—*why* they are burning the couch. Those crazy Neumiller kids.

The worst thing, Tim thinks, is that it will be preserved forever; its smoke will stay in the atmosphere.

The worst thing, Charles thinks, is that it will be preserved forever; it occupies the prominent position in most of the family photographs:

Jerome as an infant, wearing a knitted bonnet, propped up in it.

Their father in forties dress, grinning broadly, with his arm around their mother's neck, a doily on the couch's back.

Susan, the youngest, as an infant, Tim and Marie on either side of her, the doily absent.

A photograph by a charlatan who came to the house several months after their mother died, when the five of them were home alone, and said that he'd been sent to do their portrait (a lie; but they were so

conscious of how her death had changed them, made them different from their friends, they thought it only natural) and had them get into their Sunday clothes, mack down their hair with water and oil, and line up in graduating order (Jerome, twelve, down to Susan, two) on the couch, covered now with rugs, and then he adjusted the camera on the tripod, hid under his executioner's hood, and snapped. Everybody was leaning back too far (had the shims slipped?): mostly fluffed skirts, girls' bloomers, and the pulled-up pantlegs, the shinbones, and the patterns in the socks of the boys.

A row of eyes like holes in paper.

And even when Jerome and Charles and Tim started using the family camera, deliberately trying to keep the couch out of the frame, there was:

Jerome the valedictorian in his mortarboard and tassel; a close-up, somehow distorted, so that an arm of the couch seems to be resting on his shoulder.

Tippy, their since-departed dog, lying in front of a leg with a wedge under it.

Christmas, in color; gifts and wrappings strewn over the room, Susan and Marie displaying their new dresses, and way in the background, right at the focal point, a white area of wadding (where some rugs have slipped down) stares between them like an eye.

Well, now I can bring Budke here, Charles thinks. She is the girl he's been dating since high school, and in the space of five years she hasn't once been in the house, though she lives only a few blocks away. The closest she came was during a Halloween party, when she and Charles were paired up for a treasure hunt, and the only trinket they needed to complete their list and win was an Indian-head penny, so Charles, who had a collection of them at home, sped her there in the car, and when she started to get out with excitement, as though she meant to enter the place, he said, "Wait a minute. That's right. I lost those about a year ago."

And drove her off.

A smoking hole appears below a cushion, and orange-and-red flames, tines and fangs of them, spout from it, rising higher than the flames of blue. "Hey-hey, Charoontarus," Tim says, using one of the names he invented for Charles when they were younger. "Look at this." He feeds the hole more fluid, and flames hop back up the thin stream toward the can.

Charles stares at the firm set of his maturing face, where a pinkish-blond frizz, the beginnings of a beard, is sparkling on his chin in the sunlight, and suffers a sudden shock, a skip-beat of his whole being; how strange it is to be committing such an act of complicity with Tim. He hardly knows who he is.

He can see him as a frail boy of seven, small for his age, with feminine hands and pale freckles on his face and arms, sitting in the swing at the side of the house, a bare foot trailing in the oval of dirt below,

his head bowed, his face hidden, because he's been told by his older brothers to get the hell out of the way of their football game. Or walking across the backyard with his hands in his pockets toward the tree he'll sit underneath the rest of the afternoon, because he's just received a kick in the seat of the pants for pestering them.

And then he disappears. He spends two months of the summer vacation with a grandaunt and -uncle—an elderly, childless couple—on their dairy farm in Wisconsin, and when their father goes to fetch him for school in the fall, he refuses to leave; he grabs hold of the screen door, the car bumper, his granduncle's legs, and is so desperate and hysterical their father lets him stay. He receives an hourly wage from his granduncle for helping with the haying and milking and other chores and accumulates a bank account of a couple hundred dollars (a fortune to Charles and Jerome), and he enrolls in the 4-H and raises garden products and calves that he exhibits at the county fair; a photograph arrives in the mail showing him beside a Holstein steer, smiling and holding a ribbon up.

When he returns home (a form of bartering is entered upon by Martin and the elderly couple whereby he will spend one year at home with his family, plus vacations, for every two years he spends on the farm), he is entirely changed; his freckles are so enlarged and dark from working under the sun that they nearly obliterate the milk-colored skin of his face ("Freck-butt! Freck-butt!" he calls himself through clenched teeth), he is wiry and confident and charged with excess energy, and his light-green eyes have a look in them, both shy and violent, that is sometimes seen in the eyes of poets. When he becomes angry he becomes ashen and compact, a pure source of power, and attacks Jerome and Charles with windmilling fists, baseball bats, brickbats, croquet mallets; and tosses Susan and Marie around like rag dolls when they enrage him.

He invents names for people and objects, stretching language to its breaking point, beyond its breaking point into another realm where it makes its own sense, calling himself "Tivalin," a name that encompasses his diminutive size, his high voice, his shyness with its underlying violence, and his humor, piercing and self-deprecatory—"Freck-butt!" A neighbor lady, a plump, gossipy woman with pink glasses perched on a pointed nose, and buck teeth, whose friendliness toward the motherless family is too Christian and unctuous to escape his sensitive antenna, he refers to as "Whit-tea-whew!-Alabow-shurs," a title that calls up her aura like a magical incantation and also reminds you, for some reason, that her name is Lucille. Their father, a solemn man who has little patience with fooling or impropriety and has, in the years since their mother died, treated

the five of them in a manner that is almost formal, receives the name of "Heap Big M," which Tim calls Martin to his face; and gets away with it; makes Martin blush, even, as though he's receiving a compliment.

Again he vanishes into Wisconsin and the care of the elderly couple, and when he materializes the next time, at the age of twelve, he is unrecognizable; though he's hardly grown, he's put on fifty pounds and his face is so fat his cheeks look inflated. His walk is waddling and burdened, robbed of its former grace, his eyes are dull with introspection, his hands are stumpy and covered with warts, he chews his nails until the ends of his fingers are ragged and bloody, and to reduce him to tears all you have to do is call him "Fat One," which Charles does often, recalling the bruises inflicted by baseball bats. His only defense is a halfhearted recasting of his name to "Ton-ofabelly" and, at Christmastime, a revision of "Jolly Old St. Nicholas" to "Christmas Eve is coming soon, I can tell you that. But please-please don't tell anyone that I am too fat."

He is so miserable and tormented that Martin lets him return to Wisconsin for good, and when Charles is a freshman in college, he receives a card, a letter, actually, from Tim on his birthday, at a time when he's out of money and wondering where he'll get his next meal; a twenty-dollar bill is enclosed. In a flat, erratic, self-effacing script that takes many readings to translate, Charles learns that Tim is doing well in high school, that he's been running in the country, in the woods, and over the hills of the farm, and might join the track team in Pettibone next year (further bartering has provided that he shall spend his second and last years of high school at home, and *then* be free to do what he wants), that he is going to submit more poems (more? Charles didn't know he wrote) for publication in the school magazine and maybe send a few that have already been printed in it to a couple of magazines in New York, and that their granduncle, who is growing old and rheumatic, has deeded half of his property to him, so it will probably be his duty to take over the farm when he's finished with high school and run it while he attends college part-time; he's going to major in biology. At the end of the letter, a sentence stands out as if in italics, "In the coming year, may God grant you the happiness you've given so unselfishly to me and to others," and makes Charles ache. Happiness? All he can think of is torment. How can Tim say he's given happiness to anybody, especially to Tim? Who is he?

When Charles last saw him, in his final incarnation, when he was home during spring vacation, he watched at a track meet as Tim started out the mile with twenty other runners, and stood locked in astonishment when Tim, on the last lap, began passing the entire field as if they were moving backward, and came sprinting down the final stretch with nobody in sight behind him and snapped the string,

L. Woiwode's book *What I'm Going To Do, I Think* received the William Faulkner Award this spring.

throwing out his arms toward Charles, to break the county record.

Charles looks at Tim, who is standing with a leg forward and his head bowed, chin on his chest, as though deep in some unreachable thought.

Who is he?

What is he thinking? Tim wonders. He's probably wishing we'd never burned it. He's always liked to save things. Maybe we should have kept it in the basement or the attic, or our room upstairs, to remind us of all we've done in the past; how he used to play catch with me when nobody else would; how he walked home from school with me when I was small, to keep the bigger, stronger kids off my back; how we rode our bicycles out to Kyle Lake all that summer, five miles each way, and went swimming and boating and started to smoke; how he took me on camping trips to the State Forest; how it used to take both of us to move that big old mower mounted on bicycle tires, one pushing, one pulling with a rope, when we mowed the cemetery nobody else ever mowed where Mom is buried; how he let me help him build the cages and take care of the birds the year he started his "pigeon parlor," the first thing that got me interested in animals, and how we decided to let them go, because they looked so

unhappy, and watched them circle above us, dark and light, dark and light, and then disappear.

Tim looks up just as Charles looks up, their eyes meet, they hold, and then both of them turn to the couch, uneasy; awkward and embarrassed at the feeling between them.

Charles stares at the flames, at the skeleton of springs beginning to emerge from the tatters and ashes, and feels a regret, a deep remorse, start rising in him, when Tim suddenly gives him a shove, and says, "Better stand back," and sprays on so much fluid there is a *whoosh* as loud as the smoke pot in a vanishing act.

Better stand back. The words, like another piece of magic, charge the air between them and make Charles realize that he will always have to be protected and that Tim, for all his early frailties, will be the person powerful enough to do it. Tim. His brother. Brother, he thinks, and the simplicity of it lifts him into another state, unself-conscious and holy, where all he has to do is cry, "Hey-hey!" and prod the couch to get it burning better.

"Hey-hey!" Tim answers, and grabs a length of 2 by 4 and whacks its back and watches a cloud of sparks climb into the sky and disappear.

They are burning the couch. □

PIGEONS

by Ugo Fasolo,

translated by Ezra Pound

To the Father of his Country (bronze)

Riva degli Schiavoni:

aloft on his helmet, on the top, the very top
a pigeon, as ever, a pigeon
comes to rest, looks down
and eases himself.

On the King's head and shoulders
on the head and rump of the horse
guano accumulates.

On the great cornices of civilized Istrian stone,
on the pinnacles against heaven
and on the brackets of streetlamps
there are pigeons, the sacred cows of Venice,
pure and cooing doves

freeing themselves of corrosive superfluities suddenly
on the head of pedestrians—

(On the Grand Canal and out over the Laguna, the gulls
moving seaward and landward
rest, white, on the green water;

hale and hearty, birds of a different feather.)

He-pigeon and hen-pigeon cavort on the pavement,
urban, outnumbering the citizens;

People! too many; they also besmirching crowned heads,
defiling brows and memorials. . . .

We demythicize, we raise our trophies of excrement.

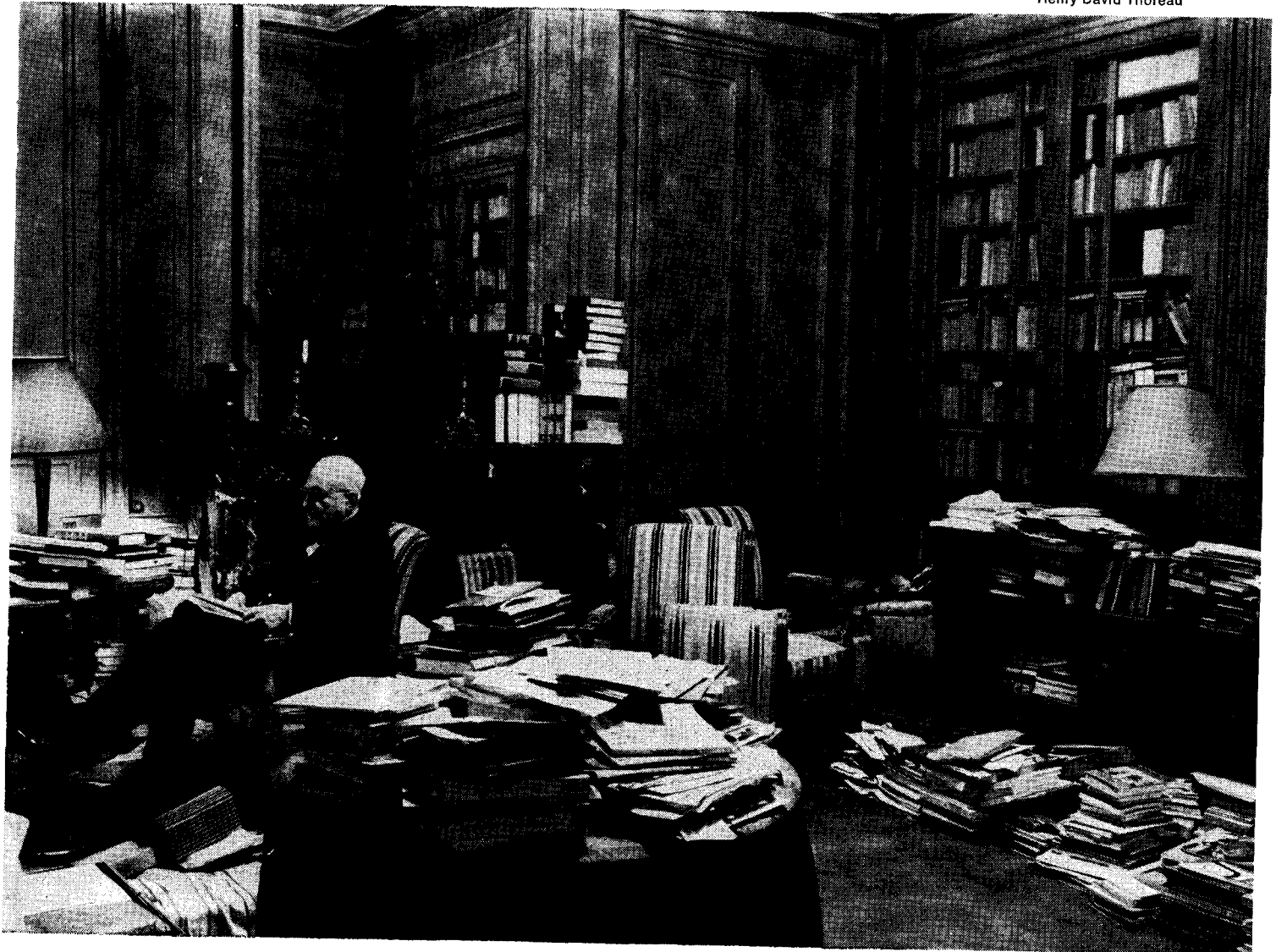
Let no one impede us or affront pigeons—winged shapely,
having no talons—

Let no one contest our liberty to be empty,
regimented into dirty grey, mocking the monuments
which overshadow us.



"Read the best books first,
or you may not have a chance
to read them at all."

Henry David Thoreau



photograph by André Kertész

Rand McNally

*publishers
book manufacturers
mapmakers*



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2 POEMS BY JOHN BERRYMAN

THE HELL POEM

Hospital racket, nurses' iron smiles.
Jill & Eddie Jane are the souls.
I like nearly all the rest of them too
except when they feed me paraldehyde.

Tyson has been here three heavy months;
heroin. We have the same doctor: She's improving,
let out on pass tonight for her first time.
A madonna's oval face with wide dark eyes.

Everybody is jolly, patients, nurses,
orderlies, some psychiatrists. Anguishes;
gnawings. Protractions of return
to the now desired but frightful outer world.

Young Tyson hasn't eaten since she came back.
She went to a wedding, her mother harangued her
it was all much too much for her
she sipped wine with a girlfriend, she fled here.

Many file down for shock & can't remember after
whether they ate breakfast. Dazed till four.
One word is: the memory will come back.
Ah, weeks or months. Maybe.

Behind the locked door, called "back there,"
the worse victims.
Apathy or ungovernable fear
cause them not to watch through the window starlight.

They can't have matches, or telephone. They slob food.
Tantrums, & the suicidal, are put back there.
Sometimes one is promoted here. We are ecstatic.
Sometimes one has to go back.

It's all girls this time. The elderly, the men,
of my former stays have given way to girls,
fourteen to forty, raucous, racing the halls,
cursing their paramours & angry husbands.

Nights of witches: I dreamt a headless child.
Sobblings, a scream, a slam.
Will day glow again to these tossers, and to me?
I am staying days.





OLYMPUS

In my serpentine researches
I came on a book review in *Poetry*
which began, with sublime assurance,
a comprehensive air of majesty,

"The art of poetry
is amply distinguished from the manufacture of verse
by the animating presence in the poetry
of a fresh idiom: language

so twisted & posed in a form
that it not only expresses the matter in hand
but adds to the stock of available reality."
I was never altogether the same man after *that*.

I found this new lawgiver all unknown
except in the back numbers of a Cambridge quarterly
Hound & Horn, just defunct.
I haunted on Sixth Avenue until

at 15¢ apiece or 25
I had all 28 numbers
& had fired my followers at Philolexian & Boar's Head
with the merits of this prophet.

My girls suffered during this month or so,
so did my seminars & lectures &
my poetry even. To be a *critic*, ah,
how deeper & more scientific.

I wrote & printed an essay on Yeats's plays
redeploying all of Blackmur's key terms
& even his sentence-structure wherever I could.
When he answered by hand from Boston my nervous invitation

to come & be honored at our annual Poetry Reading,
it must have been ten minutes before I could open the envelope.
I got *him* to review Tate's book of essays
& *Mark* to review *The Double Agent*. Olympus!

I have traveled in some high company since
but never so dizzily.
I have had some rare girls since but never one so philosophical
as that same spring (my last spring there) Jean Bennett.

Was the brilliant playwright finished? Many thought so as bad plays flopped and bad news circulated about the man who wrote *A Streetcar Named Desire* and a dozen other dramas. But here he is, alive and well in Key West, and much revealed.

Tennessee Williams picked up a postcard from the coffee table in the living room of his house in Key West, Florida. "My mother's crazy again," he announced. Then he tilted his head to one side and laughed. The laughter was mellow and bubbling. The tip of his tongue darted between his even white teeth as though to savor it before it escaped.

He handed the card to his old friend Andrew Lyndon. "Miss Edwina's saner than I am," Lyndon said doubtfully.

"Hell," said Tennessee, "she's saner than I am." He laughed again, and the other people in the room—John Young, his secretary-companion; David Loovis, a novelist who has known Tennessee for twenty years; and my wife and I—laughed, too.

When the card came around to me, I saw that it was an antique, something that Tennessee's mother must have found in the back of a seldom-opened desk drawer. The front showed a tinted photograph of a mountain scene, the colors thin and faded now. The caption read, "Where Three States Meet—Harpers Ferry, W. Va., on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad."

It was addressed to "Mr. Thomas L. (Tennessee) Williams" at Key West, and had been postmarked only a week or so earlier. The message, written in the spidery hand of the aged, said, "Dearest Son, This is the view from the Knoxville 'Country Club.' I'm sure Rose must have seen it when she made her debut. Love, Your Mother."

"I just can't understand it," said Tennessee, rubbing the back of his neck. "Mother is eighty-eight years old, but she isn't senile at all. Her mind is just as quick . . ."

"Rose is Tennessee's sister," Loovis told me in a quiet aside. "She's been a patient in a sanitarium in Ossining, New York, for years."

Tennessee heard him. "Rose," he said, "had the first prefrontal lobotomy ever performed in the United States. That was in . . ." He paused, thinking. "She was twenty-six then and she's sixty now, so I guess it was 1936. It was a terrible operation. My mother gave permission to have it done while

I was away. I think she was frightened by Rose's sexual fantasies. But, y'know, that's all they were—fantasies. I'm sure she's still a *virgin*."

Tennessee asked John Young to bring him a martini, the one drink of hard liquor that he allows himself each day, and the conversation drifted on to other topics.

* * *

I had gone to Key West in mid-May to complete a convalescence from a difficult illness. It was Loovis, an old friend of mine, who suggested that I meet Tennessee and write an article about him. "He's a new man," Loovis said. "It's the most wonderful thing I've ever seen."

In October, 1969, Loovis told me, Williams had entered the Renard psychiatric division of Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. During a two-month stay there he seemed to have broken a dependence on pills—stimulants, tranquilizers, sleeping potions—and alcohol that had imprisoned him for years in a deepening emotional fog.

"He never knew where he was most of the time," Loovis said. "He staggered. His hands shook. He was incoherent. He'd get paranoid, and scream and shout and cry."

In 1968 the *Times* carried a story about Williams. It said that he had disappeared from his apartment on West Seventy-second Street, leaving behind a note that said, "If anything of a violent nature happens to me, ending my life abruptly, it will not be a case of suicide, as it would be made to appear. I am not happy, it is true, in a net of con men, but I am hard at work, which is my love, you know."

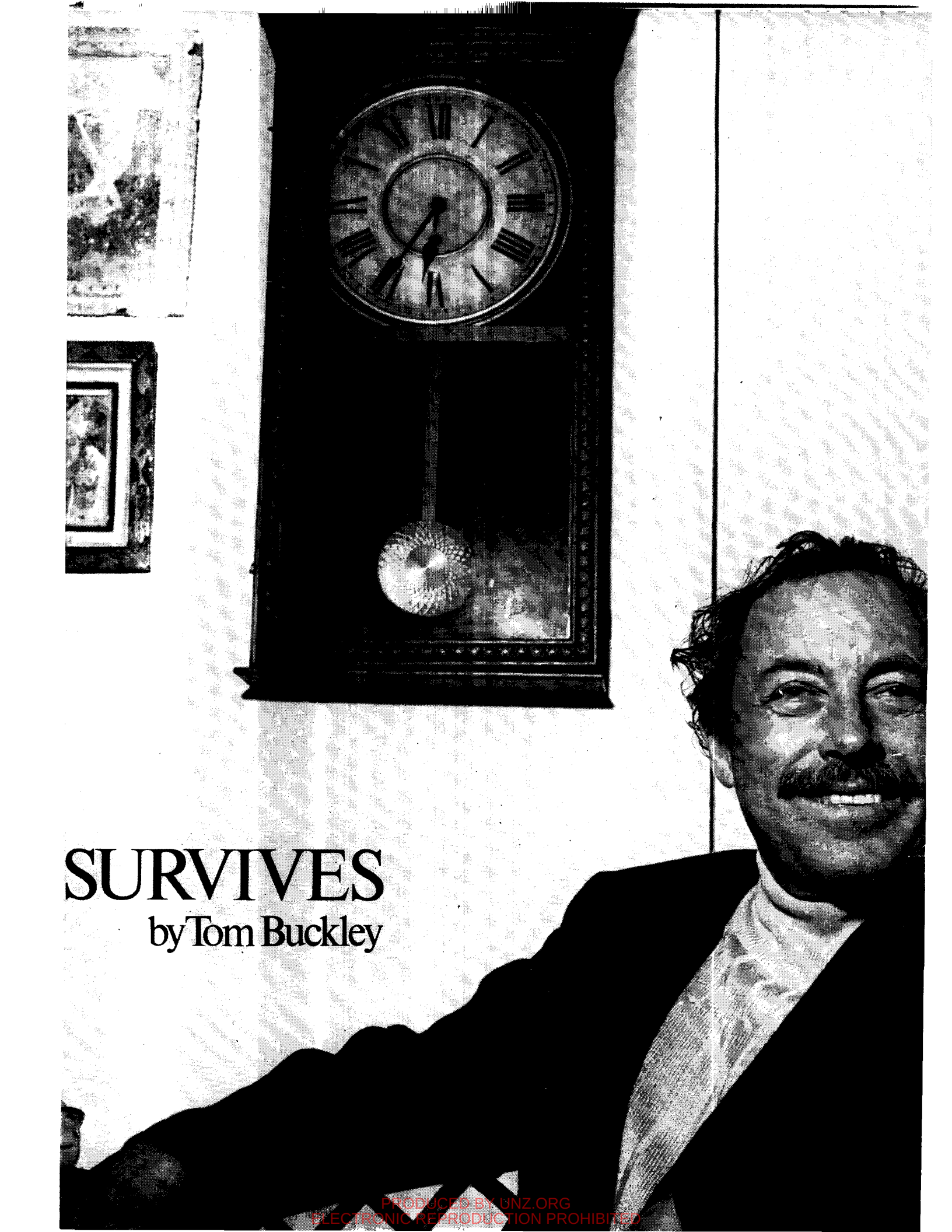
During the few hours a day of comparative lucidity that he experienced, Williams tried to keep writing. His plays were produced, but the critics received them with growing disappointment. They ranged downward from the respectable failure of *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* in 1963, to *Slapstick Tragedy* and *Kingdom of Earth*, to the

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

final fiasco of *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* in 1969, of which *Time* said, "It seems more deserving of a coroner's report than a review."

But the man I met in Key West gave reason to hope that the verdict that Williams, who is generally regarded as the country's foremost living playwright, was finished as a creative force was premature. I had seen him in a New York café three or four years before, and he had been puffy-faced and pasty white. Now he was tanned, and his gray-blue eyes were clear behind his heavy-framed spectacles. His chestnut-colored hair had begun to thin at the top but was still full at the back and sides. The

Tennessee Williams at home in Key West.



SURVIVES

by Tom Buckley

British officer's mustache that he has worn for years was frosted with gray, but it seemed to fit his face better than when he was younger. He had lost twenty pounds, I was told, and looked trim and well muscled, wearing a high-fashion shirt of a crepe-like material, with long collar points and puffed sleeves, tan shorts, and heavy leather sandals. He seemed calm, indubitably lucid, and mildly amused at himself and the world.

"Y'know, baby," said Tennessee, pulling out the word "baby" like a string of taffy. "I spent seven years behind a veil of pills and whiskey, and I've never enjoyed life as much as I'm enjoyin' it now. If I can just get my ticker regulated, I'll probably live to be as old as my grandfather—he was ninety-eight when *he* died—and I'd adore it. . . . I've *almost* died so many times, but I *don't* die just because I don't want to."

"You're goin' to live to be *one hundred and thirty-nine*, Tom," said Lyndon, arching back his head and letting his glance dart around the room. Tennessee's oldest friends call him Tom. Lyndon, who is also a Southerner, in his middle forties, from Macon, Georgia, has been a peripheral figure in the literary world for twenty-five years or so, including a considerable period as the companion of Christopher Isherwood. Now, seemingly down on his luck, he was staying with Tennessee as a houseguest.

"I survived," Williams said, raising his head. "The soles of my feet were cut open and pebbles sewn inside so I could not run away—I survived."

Andrew chimed in. "I survived it all."

This speech, which I found was from a melodrama of the 1920s, *The Shanghai Gesture* by John Colton, was a sort of recognition signal in Williams' circle. It was often quoted from, and is spoken by Mother God Damn, the owner of the largest brothel in the world, in febrile Shanghai. In it she describes how she was sold to the sinister "junk men," operators of floating houses of prostitution, as a gently reared young girl:

Yes—yes—yes—all—all I survived—whippings with hippo hide when I was stubborn—hot dung thrust into my nostrils and stinging leeches in my ears so I could not sleep—I survived!—sulphur burned on my naked back to make my tired body gay . . . soles of my feet cut open and pebbles sewn inside so I could not run away—I survived! I survived it all! Hate helped me—black gods helped me—hell and the devil helped me—I lived! I lived!

* * *

Since getting out of the hospital Williams has been spending most of his working hours revising *Two-Character Play*. Produced in England in 1967, it received generally unenthusiastic reviews, although the critic of the *Times* of London wrote, "Mr. Williams succeeds quite brilliantly in sustaining the idea that nothing whatever is to be relied upon and that if we get through one veil there is another just beyond."

"*Two-Character Play*," in Tennessee's words, "is a play within a play within a play." Its two characters are a brother and sister, Felice and Claire, and the setting is an empty theater in a cold, distant place "that could be the North Pole."

"It's my best play since *Cat*," Tennessee said. "Maybe better. But it's got to be more than that. It's got to be totally *invulnerable*. The critics don't like to find out that they've been *wrong*."

A lifetime around the theater has given Williams many stogy mannerisms. His conversation often sounds like dialogue in an as yet unwritten play. He changes pitch, intonation, and timing, and thickens his Southern accent, or makes it disappear, to suit what he's saying.

"I think that Audrey Wood thinks I'm dead," he said quietly, looking at his hands. "She thinks that *Two-Character* should be produced off-Broadway. I think she wants *all* my work produced off-Broadway." (Miss Wood has been Tennessee's agent since his first commercial production in 1940. "A thirty-year love-hate relationship," she calls it. She had spent the preceding week with him. When I relayed his comments to her in her New York office, she said, "Of course I want to see him produced on Broadway. That's just Tennessee's 'normal' paranoia.")

Tennessee's voice got darker. "Well, she's *wrong*! Work is what I've given my life to and what I'll dedicate my death to, and if she . . . gets . . . in . . . the . . . way . . . *Out!*"

His mood lightened. He mentioned that he had asked Miss Wood to talk to Margaret Leighton about appearing in a fall production of *Two-Character Play*. To him, she is "the best actress in the world." His all-time favorite is long-dead now—Laurette Taylor, who played the mother in his first great success, *The Glass Menagerie*.

"In the dressing room, Maggie is the most nervous person in the world," Tennessee said, miming the shaking hands, clattering elbows, and collapsing knees of the tall, cadaverously thin actress. "She shakes so . . . she just rattles. Why, she can't even make herself up." He aimed a make-believe powder puff at his cheek, missed, and sent it out past his ear. "But something happens in the wings." His gestures flowed into calm beauty, and he paused at the wonder of the transformation. "Oh, I love her!" he said. "She makes a play come together. I thought she was marvelous in *Gnaedische Fraulein*. She couldn't help *The Mutilated*, though." He paused again. "Nobody could."

"Maggie turned down *Sweet Bird of Youth*, y'know," Tennessee said. "She didn't think it was for her. [Geraldine Page scored an enormous success in the role of the aging actress, Alexandra del Lago.] But *Bird* has never been done in England. Maggie could do it there. I told her I'd rewrite the second act for her so that the action remained at the hotel. That way she'd dominate the play even more completely."

Almost all of the great roles in Williams' plays have been written for actresses—Vivien Leigh, Jessica Tandy, Barbara Bel Geddes, Anna Magnani, Maureen Stapleton, Julie Harris, Bette Davis, Anne Meacham, Helen Hayes. The only one he criticized was Miss Hayes, who appeared in the Laurette Taylor role in a revival of *The Glass Menagerie*. Tennessee said, "She can't act! She acts in rehearsal, but as soon as she gets in front of an audience she becomes a monkey. All those ridiculous grimaces."

He went on to say that he regretted that Greta Garbo had never appeared in one of his plays. "A wonderful woman," he said. "I read a screenplay for her one night years ago in her apartment in New York—at the Ritz Tower, I think. One of the big Hollywood directors—I can't think of his name—said to me, 'Garbo *must* go on acting.' [As he said it, Tennessee sounded like Cecil B. De Mille.] I said, 'I couldn't agree with you more, and I think I have a script that might interest her.' 'Well, for God's sake, go up and see her,' the director said. Well, I did. And all the time I was readin' we were drinkin' schnapps and she was saying, 'Wonderful . . . wonderful . . . how beautiful.' I thought I had her. When I finished, she said, 'Wonderful . . . marvelous . . . but I'm afraid it isn't for me.'" He laughed his big booming laugh, and we joined in.

* * *

Tennessee visited Key West in 1941. He was bruised in spirit. His first commercially produced play, *Battle of Angels*, had been booed off the stage during its Boston tryout. "The Theatre Guild [which had produced it] gave me \$100 and told me to go away and rewrite and I came here," he said. "I stayed in a little cottage behind the old Southern Winds. Cora was very kind to me." Tennessee nodded to Loovis, who had worked at the hotel, now demolished, and used it for the setting of a novel, *The Last of the Southern Winds*.

Williams earlier received a Rockefeller fellowship of \$1000 that Audrey Wood doled out to him at the rate of \$25 a week. During the war years he worked at a variety of menial jobs, including a brief stint as a screenwriter at MGM, but he kept working on his plays. He returned to Key West, he said, in 1946, after the triumphant opening of *The Glass Menagerie*, with his beloved grandfather, the Reverend Walter Dakin, an Episcopal priest who was by then retired from the pulpit.

"We drove down from New Orleans—Grandpa was staying with me there—in a secondhand Pontiac," Williams said. "We stayed at the La Concha Hotel. Key West was still very, very lovely, primitive and completely unspoiled. I loved it . . . I still do!"

In those days Key West was much more a part of the Caribbean world than of the mainland United

States—closer to Havana and easier to get to than it was to Miami—a town of weathered white houses with wide verandas, the brawling fishermen, smugglers, and sailors of *To Have and Have Not*. Hemingway lived there before he crossed the straits to Cuba. The present reality is not so pleasant or picturesque, but Williams stays faithful to the memory and, indeed, re-creates it around himself.

In 1949 he bought, for a few thousand dollars, the house we were sitting in. It's a tiny place, really, white clapboard with bright red shutters, a dollhouse that suggests Nantucket rather than the tropics. Over the years Tennessee has made additions—a pool, a covered patio, and most recently an elaborate kitchen at the rear. Behind the pool is a garage that he uses as a workroom. His next construction project will be a gazebo that he will call the Jane Bowles Summer House. Mrs. Bowles is the author of a play called *In the Summer House*; she and her husband, Paul Bowles, the writer and composer, are old friends of Williams', and he often stays with them at their home in Tangier.

The entrance to Williams' house, on the corner of Leon and Duval Streets, the edge of the old section of Key West, is shaded by a bushy traveler palm. It is one of more than 300 varieties of tropical plants that he had planted on the grounds. There are screw pine, coconut, Washingtonian fan, and areca cluster palms, pandanus, crotons with shiny crinkly mottled leaves, begonia, bougainvillea, hibiscus, many varieties of hybrid orchids, pink allamanda, split-leaf philodendron, and cocos plimosa, to name a few. By night their leaves stir softly, illuminated by lights on the patio and around the pool.

The living room of Tennessee's house is only about 10 feet wide and perhaps 20 feet long. Most of the furniture is made of wicker; the cushions are covered with faded chintz. Two of the occasional chairs have elaborately woven backs that form a kind of peacock's eye pattern. Tennessee said they came from Havana. A copper and brass chandelier dangling crystal and blue glass hangs over the glass-and-wrought-iron dining table at the far end of the room. Built into the wall behind the table are shelves on which are oddments of china and glassware. There is an Irish Belleek cream pitcher and cup, all that remains of a set that was too fragile to last, given to him by his friend Carson McCullers.

His paintings are pleasant and unobtrusive, the sort that are picked up here and there at moderate prices as keepsakes rather than investments. There are faintly impressionistic oils by Henry Faulkner, a Key West artist who is an old friend; an ant's-eye view of grasses, silvery greens and browns, that he bought in Tangier from a Moroccan artist; a thoughtful sketch of himself, done perhaps twenty years ago; a Toulouse-Lautrec poster of La Goulue. A model of a square-rigger stands on a bookshelf. Replying to my question, Tennessee said it was the ship on which his ancestors had arrived in America. "In

Mr. Buckley is a staff writer on the New York *Times Magazine*.

1491," he said. "They were . . . uh . . . bond servants of the first settlers, and they came over to get things ready for them." He assumed a Deep South darky dialect. "They was a-polishin' up the silver and cleanin' the lamp chimneys fo' dere mas-tuhs . . ."

The household has three pets—a Boston bull terrier bitch called Gigi, who wears a rhinestone collar and is beginning to suffer from obesity; a skinny tan tomcat named Gentleman Caller after one of the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*; and an iguana of uncertain sex that bears the compromise name of Mr. Ava Gardner. (The Ava Gardner of no uncertain sex appeared in the film version of *The Night of the Iguana*.) The iguana lives in a glass cage on the patio, subsisting on a diet of lettuce leaves and hibiscus blossoms and whatever insects come within reach of his, or her, long pink tongue.

Gigi may be in better spiritual shape than her master. In the winter of 1968-1969, at the nadir of Williams' depression, he twice became seriously ill with pneumonia. At the urging of his brother, who became a convert to Roman Catholicism while serving in India in the Army during the Second World War, he permitted himself to be baptized as a Catholic. ("He was stoned out of his mind," a friend told me.) Lately he has been embarrassed by this defection from the faith of his fathers, but the priest who guided his conversion continues to call on him every week or two.

"There's nothing Tennessee can do about it," a friend said. "He likes the priest and doesn't want to offend him. But the whole thing makes him uncomfortable. The last time the priest was here Tennessee asked him to bless Gigi. He told the priest"—and here the friend assumed Williams' mellowest, stagiest voice—"Her only sin, Father, is *gluttony*."

* * *

For several days I saw a good deal of Williams—at dinner, afternoons at his pool, playing bridge, and chatting over cocktails. Nothing broke the flow of conversation quicker, I found, than a direct question; but left to himself he got around to most of the things that seemed to be on his mind. From time to time he talked about his early life:

Williams' vanished Eden is Columbus, Mississippi. He lived there for the first twelve years of his life with his mother, sister, and brother in the rectory of Grace Episcopal Church, where Mrs. Williams' father was the rector. Her husband, Tennessee's father, a shoe salesman, spent most of his time on the road. In the second decade of this century, rural Mississippi still dozed and dreamed of its magical antebellum past, and Tennessee's grandfather, a member of an old family, a graduate of Sewanee, minister of the church at which Columbus' best people worshiped, provided a local definition of gentility and high status.

It was Tennessee's aggressive, hard-drinking,

poker-playing, womanizing father who destroyed it all when he became a sales manager for his company and moved his family to St. Louis, where the home office was situated. Good-bye magnolias, good-bye status. Under the influence of his mother, that slightly cracked Southern belle, Tennessee grew up hating his father. That has changed now, he said. After the failure of *Orpheus Descending* in 1957, Tennessee's depression became so profound that he spent a year in psychoanalysis with Dr. Lawrence Kubie in New York. Although Dr. Kubie tried unsuccessfully to change his sexual orientation, which was bound to fail, Tennessee said, "because I was in love at the time," he regarded this period of therapy as successful.

"I stopped hating my father, and when I did I felt like a great load was lifted from my mind," he said. "I was able to understand him better—his drinking, for one thing. My mother would scream, 'I know where his liquor is. He's hidden it behind the bathtub.' If only she'd've sat down and had a sherry with him. . . ."

As it happened, the sum total of influence on him led Tennessee to become homosexual, a circumstance that I think no longer particularly disturbs him. He nevertheless is his father's son in many ways—boastful of his masculinity, not inclined to run from a fight, and, at least until a few months ago, a notable drinker and poker player. I would hazard a guess that he prefers to see himself as an old-school Southern gentleman-playwright-man-of-the-world, with a sexual preference that he shares with kings, rather than as an aesthete in the traditional lavender-scent mold.

At Loovis' house one afternoon Tennessee got to talking about fraternity life at the University of Missouri. Because of the influence of his father, who had been a member, he became a pledge of Alpha Tau Omega. The brothers did not approve of him, he said. The solitary, poetry-writing youth was not regarded, correctly enough, as fraternity material.

"They thought I was a sissy boy," said Tennessee, making the sibillance of "sissy" sparkle in his mouth. "They were right!" He laughed. "And I thought *they* were a bunch of drunken bums, but there were a couple of good guys, too."

He closed his eyes for a moment. "I used to go to their parties," he said. "I used to take an Alpha Delta Pi. She was a *nymphomaniac*, y'know. They just *loved* her. When I picked her up at the sorority house I'd give her a slap right here [he cupped an imaginary breast] and she'd giggle and shake so."

The pledges were paddled, of course, the sort of thing that in English public schools has for centuries planted the seeds of sadomasochism; and once, Tennessee said, he was required to drink a glass of grain alcohol. "It almost killed me," he said. "I passed out, and when I came to I went into the bathroom and vomited green, and I mean *green*."

In time, he went on, he became good friends with

another of the pledges, a companion in misery, with whom he shared a bedroom in the fraternity house. Friendship ripened into intimacy, and the two youths began sharing each other's beds.

"The first time," Tennessee said, "he just scratched my arm, and I came." A few nights later the other youth, whom he referred to only as "Green Eyes"—"Oh, those green eyes," Tennessee interjected lasciviously—sought to display his affection again. "He slid into my bed," said Tennessee, letting his voice go falsetto in what I presumed was a vocal parody of a frightened virgin, "and I said, 'Wh-a-a-t do you want?'"

Tennessee said he returned to the fraternity house several years ago at the time he received an honorary degree from the university. He found no obvious changes in fraternity spirit; the brothers seemed as crass and dull to him as they had during his days there. They returned the compliment by largely ignoring their distinguished visitor, fearful perhaps that he might help them carry out their fantasies.

* * *

Since the first years of his fame, Tennessee has had a companion-secretary to shield him from the irritations of daily life and comfort him during the savage hours of loneliness and anxiety. The first of these was Frank Merlo. He was a young merchant seaman when Williams befriended him about 1950. They remained together until Merlo's death from lung cancer about five years ago.

Some of Williams' friends think that Merlo's death was the most important of the events that led to his dependence on drugs. "Tom was closer to Frank than he has ever been to anyone else," I was told. "He was in terrible shape after Frank died. Yet Tom ran away from him during his final illness. He paid all the hospital bills, of course, but he didn't go to see him. The only thing was that Tom got so frightened, he quit smoking for good."

Merlo's replacement was a tall, slender, extremely handsome would-be actor named Bill Glavin. It was his misfortune to have to put up with Williams during a period of fairly steady emotional deterioration. He also functioned as a grand vizier or presidential appointments secretary, denying access to many persons who considered themselves friends of Williams, leading them to say that Glavin was responsible for "isolating" him and enslaving him to drugs. In the months before his hospitalization, Tennessee, in his paranoia, also became convinced that Glavin was plotting against him. Soon after he was released, he dismissed him, reportedly continuing to pay him \$300 a week "to stay out of Key West."

A calm, pleasant man in his late thirties named John Young, a onetime YMCA secretary and assistant film director, had the job while I was there. He cooked for Tennessee, drove him in Tennessee's maroon convertible, answered the phone, arranged assignations, and kept the household running

smoothly. He was paid \$200 a week, I was told, and from what I saw, he more than earned it.

The advent of Young had almost completely changed the membership in Tennessee's inner circle. Most of Glavin's friends, including the woman editor of the *Key West Citizen*, were no longer welcome, while several persons who had been *persona non grata* during the Glavin regime, including my friend Loovis, were again made welcome.

In the hermetic atmosphere of Key West, these intrigues were analyzed in endless detail. Why, for example, had the *Citizen* failed to list Loovis as among those present at a certain party? Was Leoncia McGee, Williams' longtime black housekeeper, engaging in espionage for the Glavin faction? Was she supporting an army of relatives on food abstracted from Tennessee's elegant kitchen and attempting to undermine John Young by placing the blame for the missing chickens and smoked hams on him? Someone else would whisper in my ear, as softly as rustling silk, that Andrew Lyndon was trying to displace John, and tempting Tennessee back down the primrose path, by his own excessive drinking.

As befits a monarch, Tennessee appeared to take no notice of the Byzantine complexities that flourished in his little court, but I'm sure he was aware of them and, indeed, did what he could to help them along, delighting in the consternation that was caused, for example, when he invited the local horticulturalist, a man closely allied with the Glavin faction, to visit him, ostensibly to discuss additional plantings.

* * *

For a couple of years Tennessee had been taking Doriden. It was fairly dependable in getting him to sleep, but it made him feel good, he said, even when he was just lying in bed. He wouldn't mention the name of the drug, which is a synthetic described as a "potent nonbarbiturate sedative," as though it were a cabalistic password. His brother, Dakin, told me what he had got himself strung out on, and about the fact that he had another substance that he administered himself by hypodermic syringe to bring himself back to alertness. "I don't know what it was," Dakin Williams said, "but I think it was speed."

In May, 1969, *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* was produced in New York. It was Tennessee's worst disaster in a lengthening chain of disasters. He then decided to accept an invitation to go to Tokyo to see a Japanese production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He took Anne Meacham, who had starred in *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* with him.

After his return, he divided his time between his apartment on West Seventy-second Street in New York and San Francisco. He stayed at both the Mark Hopkins and the Fairmont Hotels. Dakin, who visited him, said, "His temper was so horrible that neither could satisfy him." Bill Glavin was ill in New Orleans during this period, and except for Dakin's visits, Tennessee was by himself.

He returned to Key West. Early in October, Dakin recalled, Tennessee called him at his home in Collinsville. "‘Dakin,’ he said, ‘an attempt will be made on my life tonight.’ Well, I knew what the score was," Dakin said, laughing. "So I said, ‘Tennessee, I can’t do anything about it tonight. Will it be all right if I fly down tomorrow?’ So I arrived the next morning. In the back of my mind I wanted to get him to the Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, but I couldn’t do anything without his permission. When I got there he was in dreadful shape. His arm had been badly burned by scalding water in an accident with a coffee pot a few days before, and he was badly panic-stricken. So I asked, ‘Don’t you think we better get you to a hospital?’ I’d hoped to spend a couple of days in Key West myself, but he said, ‘Yes, tonight.’ Well, that’s the way he is. So I immediately made reservations and we flew back to St. Louis.

"He was very bad on the plane going out because they’d only serve two drinks to a customer," Dakin went on. "It was a Sunday and we couldn’t get anything in St. Louis either. He was furious, but fortunately I had a bottle of liquor at my mother’s place in Clayton. We spent the night there. He was pacified by the bottle of liquor, and he promised me he’d go to Barnes the next day. I made a reservation at the hospital’s Queeney Tower, which is very exclusive. But the next morning Tennessee was very belligerent. He said he wouldn’t go. Then he got sick from the liquor. He told Mother he wanted to go to the hospital in an ambulance. I ordered the ambulance. Then he changed his mind—he said he’d go by cab—so then Mother took him in a taxi.

"I went by that evening and he was sitting up in the Queeney Tower. He had his bottle of booze and his bag of pills, and he looked like he had the world by the tail. Everything was fine. But the hospital was just making routine tests. The next day they came to some conclusions about him. They took away the booze and the pills. Tennessee did what he always does—he started to walk out. I’d sent him a big bouquet of flowers in hopes of getting a nice welcome, but he was furious with me. The doctor was there—a neurologist—and he was going to just let him walk out. So I said to myself, ‘Good God, I’ve got him this far, I’m not going to let him leave if I can help it.’ I got hold of another doctor I knew—he had treated Mother—and he said, ‘If Dakin will take the responsibility, he can sign him in for ten days, even against his will.’ So he thought when he went to the elevator that he was going to New York, but the intern got up behind him and inoculated him with something in his arm that put him to sleep, and he woke up in the only place in the hospital where they can force people to stay—Renard, the psychiatric division. I understand that when he woke up he looked around and said, ‘Where am I, the Plaza?’

"I didn’t see him for three days because he was so infuriated. He also had three convulsions coming off

the Doriden. He nearly died. The doctors said so. I was there every day except when he would get angry at me. Then I’d stay away for two or three days to pacify him. After a while he became very friendly and very much himself. I hadn’t seen him that way in several years; I’d almost forgotten what it was like. Y’know what one of the doctors told him? ‘Tennessee, if you play ball with us, you’ll write better than you ever wrote before in your life.’ That was very clever, I thought, motivating him like that. After that first month he stayed in voluntarily the second month. He could’ve gotten out in ten days if he had known his legal rights, but I didn’t tell him.

"He also was having some problem with his heart," Dakin went on. "The electrocardiogram showed some damage. I mentioned it to him to try to motivate him some more, and he said, ‘Dakin, I wish you hadn’t told me that.’" Dakin laughed again. "The doctors were all very proud to be working with Tennessee, and he got along very well with the other patients. He played bridge almost every night. Several of the women proposed marriage to him. Once it happened while I was there. Tennessee was embarrassed. ‘Oh, this is just a *put-on*,’ he said, but the woman had a very intense look."

Dakin said he hadn’t seen Tennessee since he left the hospital. In January, Dakin said, he received a telegram from his brother, asking him *not* to attend the premiere of the revival of *Camino Real* in New York. "For reasons of my own I don’t feel I can see you right now," the wire said.

"I’ve attended every opening but that one," Dakin said, "but I didn’t mind. My own attitude toward Tennessee of course is unchanged. I’m delighted that he’s well enough to be angry at me. He’s eight years older than I am, and we were never close until a couple of years ago, when he felt he needed me. For three years, you know, I paid all of Tennessee’s bills. His accountant would send me the checks and I would sign Tennessee’s name. Now that he’s gotten well and has developed a phobia against me, I’ve been relieved of that responsibility. I’ve also had the chance to pay some attention to my legal clients"—he laughed—"and my business has gone way up."

* * *

Tennessee’s recollections of his stay in what he calls "the snake pit" or "the looney bin" are rather different. His mind dwells on the convulsions—"They took me off cold turkey," he said. "They didn’t have to do that"—on the three heart attacks which he believes he suffered after the convulsions, on the cruelty of the nurses, the insensitivity of the physicians, and the monstrousness of his brother.

"The day after my second heart attack, y’know, when they made me get out of bed and go into the dayroom for breakfast, I said, ‘Please get my brother here.’" Tennessee said, sounding pitiable.

"When he got there, I said to him, ‘I’ve had a terrible heart attack, and I’m not going to live but

a day or two at most, I don't think.' And he said, 'Good.' [Tennessee stretched the word into an expression of pure malevolence.] He said, 'I'll take you down to Florida,' and then he disappeared for four days. I said, 'Why didn't my brother come back?' and they said, 'Because it's unnecessary.'"

Tennessee had given Dakin some laundry to have done. Dakin told me that his wife had washed and ironed it herself. When Dakin returned it, Tennessee denied that it had been washed at all. "I said, 'Well, listen, Dakin, you put me in this snake pit, and I don't want to look like a fuckin' bum in here *all the time*, so you get me some clean shirts, heah. You take these dirty ones that Joyce forgot to wash to a Chinaman or get me some new ones.' You know what he did? He got me four shirts made in *Hong Kong*." His intonation underscored the absurdity of Tennessee Williams wearing shirts from Asian sweatshops. "And y'know, I'm very rich. I really am. I'm an extremely wealthy man—undoubtedly one of the two or three wealthiest writers in America. . . ."

Andrew Lyndon interrupted. "Oh, my God, what a *vulgar* remark," he said.

"... But this is the irony of it," Tennessee went on. "I had to wear shirts from Hong Kong because they were the *cheapest* in the department store. There were *threads* coming out at all the seams." Tennessee made it sound as though the threads were lice. "He didn't want to spend any of the money because he thought he was gonna git *all* of it himself."

Tennessee now sounded like the meanest banker in Columbus, Mississippi, explaining how the village idiot had tried to hornswoggle him. We laughed and he told us how he had fixed up his will to make sure that Dakin was suitably punished.

"Since I've got out of the hospital I've made three trips to Miami to make sure that Mother gets nothin' [Tennessee's logic was that his mother would leave any bequest from him to Dakin when *she* died] and to make sure that Dakin had no power of attorney. I had the power of attorney rescinded twice—I made two trips to New York to make sure of it—at the Chase Manhattan Bank."

"What will you do, Tom, apart from taking care of Rose?" Andrew Lyndon asked.

"Sweetheart," Tennessee replied, "my first obligation is to Rose. . . ."

Lyndon interrupted. "Yes, I know that. . . ."

"... and I have no legal power to keep her there [the private sanitarium in Ossining] after my death if Dakin wants to take her out. [Presumably he would transfer her to a worse snake pit than Barnes.] The only way I could get around that was by leaving him \$25,000, *on condition* that he leave her there."

"When does he get the \$25,000?" John Young asked. "How do you know he won't take the money and take her out anyhow?"

"He won't get the money until after my sister's death," Tennessee said patiently, obviously pleased to have anticipated this contingency. "She's not going

to live much longer than me. She's not well. She's sixty years old and very unwell. After she dies, everything goes, aside from personal bequests, y'know, everything goes to the Rose Isabelle Williams Foundation for creative writers."

"Oh, how wonderful," said Andrew Lyndon. "Can I get a grant?"

Tennessee acted as though he hadn't heard. "This will is *airtight*," he went on. "It's the best goddamned will anybody ever wrote in his life."

"Are there four hundred and twenty-seven codicils?" Lyndon asked.

"No. No codicils *at all*," Tennessee replied. "That's what screws up a will."

"That was the trouble with the one you had before," Lyndon said.

"Yes," Tennessee agreed. "I burned it all."

"It was six hundred pages," said Lyndon. "Like something by Henry James."

"Don't worry about it," Tennessee said. "This will is a *masterpiece*. It's absolutely airtight."

"I think your will is going to be like the suicide note that Nina Capote left for Truman," Lyndon said. "'Dearest Truman, Please take care of yourself. I hid my jewelry under the icebox. Don't let that woman get hold of it. Love, your mother. P.S.—On second thought, maybe you ought to put the jewelry in my safe-deposit box, in case I need it again.'" Lyndon threw his head back to lead the laughter. "She did kill herself eventually, eight or ten years later," he said.

"What was the trouble?" John asked. "Truman?"

"No," Lyndon replied. "Joe Capote had lost most of his money. There were other things. Truman was in Europe, writing 'Beat the Devil.'"

"Nobody wrote that," Tennessee interjected. "It was all ad lib."

"They *did* have a good cast," Lyndon said.

"There was a terrific cast—Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Robert Morley, Peter Lorre—and no script," Tennessee said, closing the conversation.

* * *

In April Tennessee gave his first public reading in several years at Duke University. John Young, who accompanied him, said one evening over dinner that Tennessee had been worried about the response of the students. He feared that he had gone out of fashion or had been forgotten on the campuses. He needn't have. The students, recognizing someone whose trips on the pathways of alienation, pain, and drugs were beyond their imaginings, gave him a standing ovation. The Durham *Morning Herald* carried the story of his appearance on the first page.

"I read them a one-act play, *I Never Get Dressed 'Til After Dark on Sunday*," said Tennessee, taking up the narrative. "I told them, 'It's still sort of rough and raunchy, but you'll get the idea.' I think they did. They seemed to like it. . . ."

Recalling something to mind, he interrupted him-

self. "Did I ever get the check?" he asked Young. "They're supposed to pay me \$750."

"They wrote that they needed your social security number before they could pay you," he replied. "It's university policy. I sent it to them."

"Well, they damned well better send it," Tennessee said, sounding fierce. "I want to get paid for that gig. I'm not the kind of cat who will read for nothing."

He does though, of course. Only a week or two previously he had given the same reading for the benefit of the Key West public library. Generally speaking, he is a soft touch around the city, and in John Brown's Bar, where he goes occasionally to sit at a corner table by the window and drink a spritzer, he is frequently approached by one of Key West's floating colony of hippies to come up with bail money for someone who has been busted for drugs. In fact, with only mild irony, the city manager told me that Tennessee was "our leading citizen."

"I like young people," Tennessee said. "They're a better audience. They listen, react, identify. Thank God I can still identify with *them*. I thought I was old when I turned twenty-two. It was the only time I ever worried about my age. I only love the act of creation, the giving of the work. I like the *moment* of the applause—applause is the wrong word—I mean the acceptance . . . the acceptance of the truth. If I discovered that I could no longer write acceptably for the theater, then I would go on stage in person . . ."

"And put Judith Anderson out of business," Andrew Lyndon piped in.

". . . because I know how to communicate with an audience . . . because I want to communicate. I've always wanted to. I see no other reason for me to live, except to communicate, to love, to fight."

After a while his thoughts returned to *Two-Character Play*. "If I live," he said, "it'll be my best play, but that doesn't mean it will run more than three weeks. In any case, it'll be my last long play."

"No, no, no," said Andrew Lyndon. "Don't make nervous statements like that."

"Yes," said Tennessee firmly. "I may write some one-act plays but that will be my last long one. The effort is too great now, baby." The thought of performing came to him again. "I feel at home on the stage," he said musingly, "facing strangers. I'm a ham at heart."

John Young took the cue. "Unless you're too tired I wonder would you read for us a little . . ."

Tennessee looked around. Everyone smiled agreement. He looked questioningly at us.

"How about 'What's Next?'" John Young asked.

"No, it would give me a bad night," Tennessee replied.

"Oh, Tom, if you don't mind, read 'The Ice-Blue Wind' to us," said Andrew Lyndon.

"Baby, I'm not a poet," he said.

"If you're not a poet, what the hell are you then?" Lyndon asked.

"Plays are my vocation," Tennessee replied. "I can write a conventional and graceful lyric, but I know I'm not a poet of any consequence whatsoever. . . . If you want to hear inconsequential verse, I'm perfectly willing to read it. D'you want 'What's Next?' I'll read that. It's full of inserts, and I'll have trouble reading it without my glasses. . . ."

Young went off to find the manuscript, and Williams turned to Lyndon, who was still, with words and gestures, disagreeing with Tennessee's low opinion of his own verse.

"Baby," he said in a kindly way, "my kind of poetry is long gone out. I can keep up with the theater but not with *it*."

He slid his glasses onto his nose, and settled back in the wicker chair and cleared his throat. I recorded his reading, but with no way of knowing how the lines should be divided I have reproduced them in prose form.

"What's Next on the Agenda, Mr. Williams?" Tennessee spoke the title, as he did the rest of the poem, which he had written after leaving the hospital, in a monotone, his voice slurred and heavy. "One. Addressed to myself. Not every morning that you awaken could it indisputably be proven of you that you have awakened quite well. No, not with some mornings those tattle-tale stitches of things in the left arm and the left side of the chest. The ones familiar at night now persisting into the morning, reminding you not to forget the damaged ventricle of the heart—that unnecessary memento of your three-day stay at Brigance Division of Barnacle Hospital in the City of St. Pollution.

"The Founding Fathers must have erred in their study of the night sky's geography book. It must have been shrouded by mist off the river. Otherwise, why, forefathers, did you plant the proud flag of France there? No, I'm afraid, Mr. Williams, that there's something under your skin that's pretty fast with the needle. They're sewing a winding sheet for you. . . . But what is the whisper of the guru in the moon if it isn't a tender word for me? Smile fiercely at him, you one-quarter Hun, answer him back. Say, later. I have work to do, and maybe Maggie's still waiting.

"Two. Flashback. You say you have trouble in sleeping, inquired the doctor, a neurologist, one of the trinity who pronounce themselves to be the most eminent practitioners of their practice to be encountered anywhere in the world. . . . And he looked at me as dreamy, droop-eyed as Buddha cunningly caricatured by a devout Seventh-Day Adventist. My reply was a sigh. I really didn't have breath at the moment for more. Then he repeated his question. 'You say you do not sleep well here?' he asked me. *Here* being that funny farm, the violent ward in that city of St. Pollution to which my kid brother had committed me—I guess no less than seven months ago now. . . ."



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There were two more long parts, and when he finished reading them, Tennessee put the manuscript aside with a sigh. "It's a bitch of a poem," he said. "I don't know *what* it is, y'know. It's just a venting of venom, I suppose. Justified venom. I don't know what I'm going to do with it. I may have it published in a little magazine in Tangier. It won't attract any attention there, y'know, but I just want to get all of it on the record."

* * *

The next night I completed a bridge foursome at Williams' house. He was teamed with Andrew Lyndon and I played with John Young. To my surprise, Tennessee kept his mind on the cards. He played a reasonable game, confining the repartee to the period between the deals for the most part. He had set a stake of a tenth of a cent a point, and each time that Young and I made a contract he would roar, "This house is full of degenerates—crooks, degenerates, and card sharps!"

As the evening wore on, the telephone rang. John Young, who was also in charge of refilling drinks, answered it. "It's David Massage," he said. "He wants to know if you want him to come over."

Tennessee lifted his head from his cards, which he held close to his chest and studied with the concentration of a riverboat gambler, the role he was enacting. "Tell'm to call back at eleven," he said.

Loovis and my wife moved between the living room, glancing through Williams' bookshelves, the patio, or from time to time sitting in kibbitzers' chairs, watching the game. One moment Tennessee, who was dummy, was saying something genial, and the next he had swiveled around to face Loovis.

"Y'just sittin' there smirkin'," Tennessee said, his voice dirty and mean as any Mississippi sheriff's.

"That's not true, Tennessee," Loovis said uneasily. "I'm not smirking."

"Well, I say you're smirkin', and I *know* you're smirkin', and you might as well admit it. . . ."

Loovis, a slim man in his middle forties who has known Williams for twenty years and admires him just this side of idolatry, tried to say something, but Williams, as he frequently does, just overrode him with his forceful stage delivery.

". . . I don't *recall* havin' invited you to dinner t'night," Williams said. "Y'just decided to come along."

Loovis, who had been readmitted to the Williams' circle through the intervention of John Young, seemed to go pale under his tan. He tried again to protest.

"The *truth* is all that's important," said Williams in a voice that was now a snarl. "Tell the truth! You were the first one to mark me as a homosexual in print, but you concealed your own homosexuality. You're never gonna amount to anything as a novelist until you *learn* to tell the *truth*."

Williams was referring to Loovis' *The Last of the*

Southern Winds, which was set in Key West and had a minor character who may have been based in part on the playwright. A third novel has had Loovis hung up for the past three years or so.

"You're right, Tennessee," Loovis said weakly. "I wasn't capable of telling the whole truth at that time. That's what I'm trying to do now. That's what's making it so difficult for me."

John Young and I were making mollifying sounds in Tennessee's direction, but he seemed not to hear.

"You do anything like that *again*, baby, and you're gonna have more trouble than you *know*," said Tennessee, turning abruptly back to the card table.

Loovis, devastated, sat there silently. As soon as he could get up, John Young took him aside. "Tenn gets this way sometimes," he said. "He doesn't mean it. Why don't you take a swim and cool off. . . ."

"He *did* invite me," said Loovis. "I'm sure of it."

"Of course you were invited," John said. "Don't worry about it. Tennessee has probably forgotten about it already. Go on, take a swim. You don't need trunks. It's dark and no one else is out there. I'll get you a towel. . . . Go ahead."

By eleven o'clock we had finished three rubbers. The telephone rang again. John Young answered it. "It's David again," he told Tennessee. "He says to please let him know if you're going to want him tonight because there's something else . . ."

This was a young man, tough-looking, his muscles rippling under a porous-weave T-shirt, whom I had met a couple of nights earlier at a bar. He was one of the drifters who gravitated to Key West during the winter, and had remained there, as though he were waiting for the next flood tide to sweep him north again.

Tennessee lifted his head. "Yeah," he said, "tell him to come on over." Turning to the table, he said, "Well, let's settle up. I've had about enough bridge for the night."

John Young figured up the score. "You and Andrew owe us \$1.70 each," he said.

"Damn," said Tennessee, reaching into his pocket for the bills and the change. "The cards just wouldn't come our way tonight." He put the money on the table. "Excuse me," he said, heading for his bedroom, which is off the living room at the rear of the house.

When Tennessee returned he was carrying a life-size doll. She had seen hard use. Her celluloid face was pushed in, and her pink stuffed body looked as though it had been run over by a car. Unseen by Andrew Lyndon, Tennessee slipped up behind him and dropped the doll in his lap.

"You've just got to take better care of your chile," Tennessee said. "God, how you're neglectin' it. Poor motherless chile."

"You mean, poor childless mothah," said Andrew, patting the doll on its bottom.

"That's right," said Tennessee, laughing. "Poor childless mothah." □



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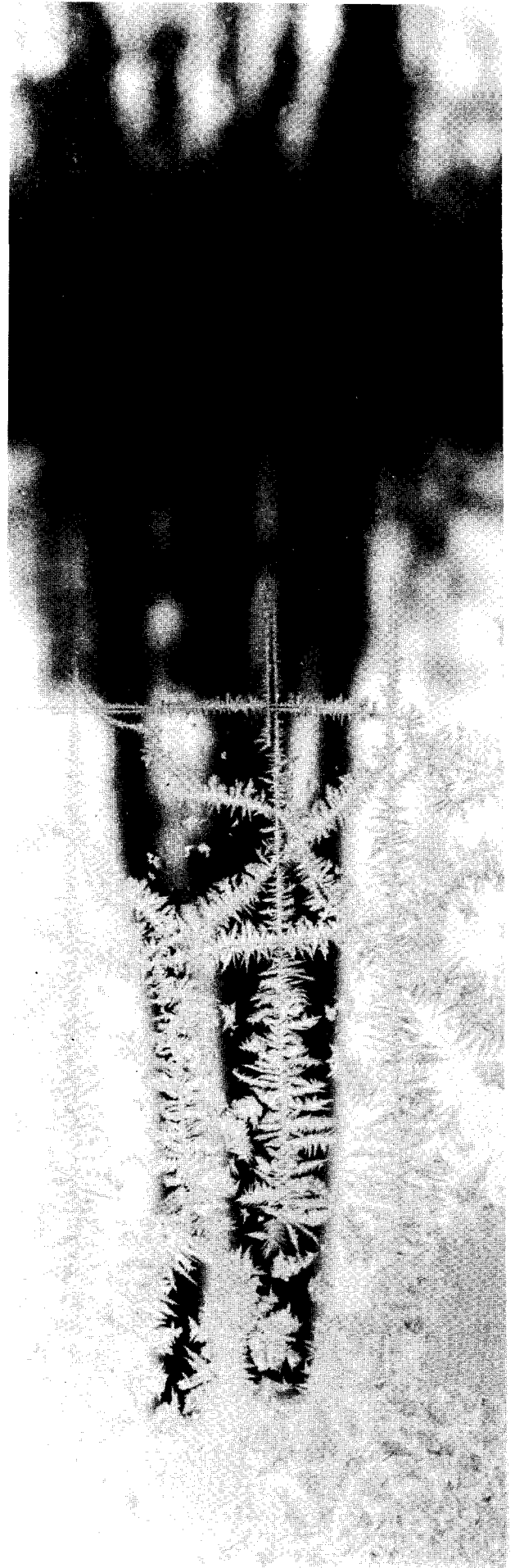
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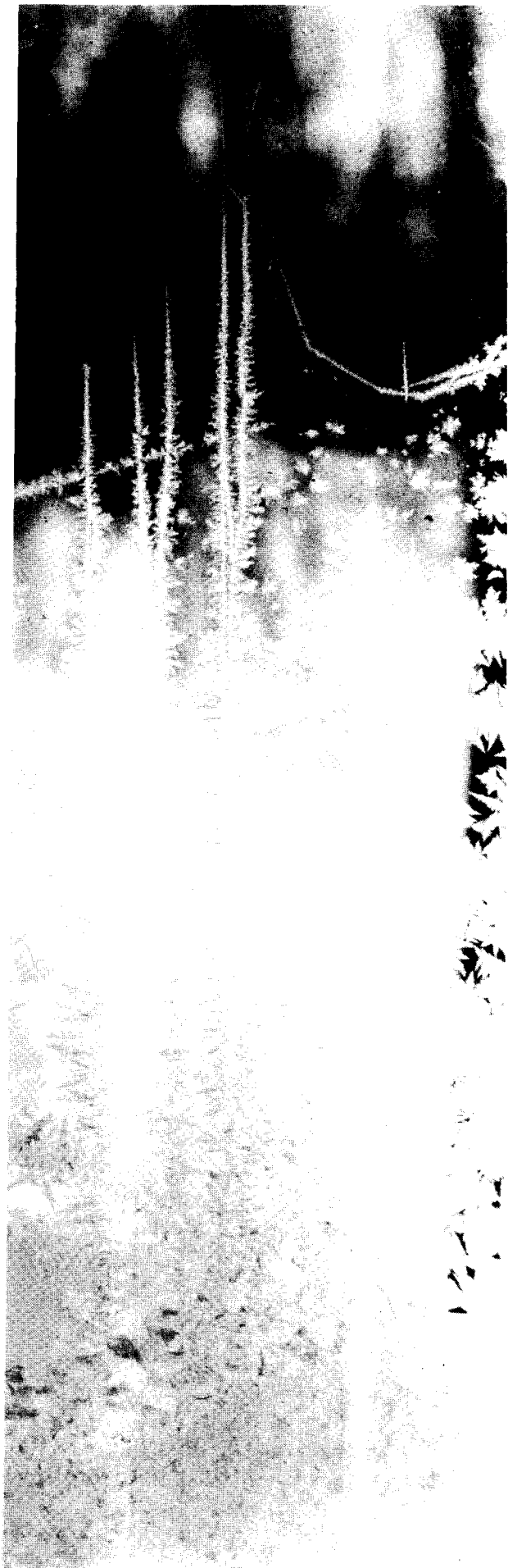
by Leslie Norris

We were warned about frost, yet all day the summer
Has wavered its heat above the empty stubble. Late
Bees hung their blunt weight,
Plump drops between those simplest wings, their leisure
An ignorance of frost.
My mind is full of the images of summer
And a liquid curlew calls from alps of air;

But the frost has come. Already under trees
Pockets of summer are dying, wide paths
Of the cold glow clean through the stricken thickets
And again I feel on my cheek the cut of winters
Dead. Once I awoke in a dark beyond moths
To a world still with freezing,
Hearing my father go to the yard for his ponies,

His hands full of frostnails to point their sliding
To a safe haul. I went to school,
Socks pulled over shoes for the streets' clear glass,
The early shops cautious, the tall
Classroom windows engraved by winter's chisel,
Fern, feather, and flower that would not let the pale
Day through. We wrote in a cold fever for the morning





Play. Then boys in the exulting yard, ringing
Boots hard on winter, slapped with their polishing
Caps the arrows of their gliding, in steaming lines
Ran till they launched one by one
On the skills of ice their frail balance,
Sliding through time with not a fall in mind,
Their voices crying freely through such shouting

As the cold divided. I slid in the depth
Of the season till the swung bell sang us in.
Now insidious frost, its parched grains rubbing
At crannies, moved on our skin.
Our fingers died, not the warmth
Of all my eight wide summers could keep me smiling.
The circle of the popping stove fell still

And we were early sped through the hurrying dark.
I ran through the bitterness on legs
That might have been brittle, my breath.
Solid, grasping at stabs of bleak
Pain to gasp on. Winter branched in me, ice cracked
In my bleeding. When I fell through the teeth
Of the cold at my haven door I could not see

For locked tears, I could not feel the spent
Plenty of flames banked at the range,
Nor my father's hands as they roughed the blue
Of my knees. But I knew what he meant
With the love of his rueful laugh, and my true
World unfroze in a flood of happy crying,
As hot on my cheek as the sting of this present

Frost. I have stood too long in the orderly
Cold of the garden, I would not have again the death
Of that day come unasked as the comfortless dusk
Past the stakes of my fences. Yet these are my
Ghosts, they do not need to ask
For housing when the early frost comes down.
I take them in, all, to the settled warmth.

LIFE AND LETTERS

ALTERNATIVES

by Richard Todd

According to Robert Glessing's recent book, *The Underground Press in America*, some 400 newspapers and magazines now serve the counter culture. There are probably as many like-minded radio stations; and more than one underground "wire service" exists, along with radical film and video-tape studios and street theater troupes and poster artists. The preferred name for this considerable activity is "alternative media."

Alternative in more senses than one: the other media offer one of the few opportunities for a radical occupation, and for some the underground is a place of corporate drama. *Rolling Stone*, the most successful of the underground papers, has a circulation of 200,000 and has started a book publishing division, headed by an editor hired away from Holt, Rinehart and Winston (though at last report the paper had run into trouble owing to overexpansion). But commercial success is abnormal and not wholly relevant: what counts, of course, is the alternative media's vision of who, and why, they are.

Speaking to this question recently, Paul Krassner said, "We want a chance to do some distortion of our own." But he was mostly kidding. Krassner, the founder of *The Realist* and ideologue for the Yippies, was addressing a group of fellow workers in the underground press, talking to several hundred of them sprawled on a sunny Vermont hillside this past summer. The occasion was the first of what may, or may not, be an annual conference sponsored by the Alterna-

tive Media Project. It was an alternative to the straight world's convention; problems of identity, not profits, occupied most minds. The four-day conference, at Goddard College, attracted 300 broadcasters, representatives of such papers as *The Liberated Guardian* and *Rat*, and such philosophers of the counter culture as Krassner and Baba Ram Dass (the former Richard Alpert). Every sort of communicator not associated with the "straight media" was welcome and was there (and several straight personalities, especially record company men, were there too, if not wholly welcome): about 2000 people at the peak. A chartered-plane-load flew in from California, an apparently marvelous journey of which Krassner said fondly: "I don't know if you've ever been on a flight where the stewardess was turning on . . . and the captain pointed out some lightning in the sky and said, 'That's God's own light show.'"

I had arrived at the conference simultaneously with a truck that said on the outside, in NASA-style lettering, "Cosmic Labs." (The driver of the truck wanted to know the way to Montpelier. The girl at the registration booth told him to take a right on the first "real road." "You mean the others aren't real? Oh, far out.") Inside, I moved across the campus and sought the crowd's flow. Goddard College is set in a high valley and surrounded by pinewoods; architecturally it is an uneasy mixture, brown-shingled, summer-place buildings amidst several small, pastel struc-

tures, which serve as dormitories. The crowd was heading through the campus and down a pine-bordered road to a field where a contingent from the New Mexican commune, the Hog Farm, had an encampment.

You might object that the Hog Farm and its many followers in the meadow (which had been provided with sanitation and water, courtesy of the college) had little to do with the "media," but perhaps this is placing too narrow a construction on the word. One way to see the Hog Farm is as a sort of ambulatory magazine: clear instructions in how-to-live come with the commune's festival services. They provided a great circus tent and food: garbage-can-sized containers of peanut butter, bread, brown rice, and a black kettle full of soup made from lettuce, carrots, and onions. To drink, electric lemonade in gallon jugs. Everyone who received some of the Hog Farmers' free LSD was painted with a bright red dot on the forehead, or occasionally treated more elaborately to warpath streaks.

The Hog Farm's buses and those of others were drawn up in a circle at noon on Friday, and in the midst of them, barebacked communicants were swigging acid from gallon jugs. A man lay spread-eagled on his back. A girl stroked his throat. He stared at the sky. His stomach, shallowly heaving, was rippled with tremors. In a moment of quiet you could hear his breath and then a choked bellow: "Happy! Happy!" he yelled.

A crew with a Sony video-tape outfit moved through the scene, shooting



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LITTLE, BROWN

and taping voices, and for a while I followed them. They were Fobile Muck, a free-lance organization devoted to traveling around the country and making tapes, with which they hope to "explain the alternative world to the straight world and the other way around." I sat with them under the Hog Farm's circus tent and listened to their tapes. Nearby an entangled couple moved in languid copulation. On the machine, sounds of swigging, as the jug of electric lemonade went around, and a recorded voice said, "This is *really* alternative media."

Meanwhile, up the hill, "workshops" were in session under such headings as "Multi-image Stereo Environment Newsletter," "The Spiritual Responsibility of the Alternative Media," "Capitalism and Alternative Media," "Radical Software." Competing with the Hog Farm's encampment and swims in the college pond, the workshops were often sparsely attended, but they had their moments. At a discussion of "Free Enterprise and the Cultural Revolution" a man brandished a gun ("This may turn into a workshop on killing people"), and the workshop leader was assaulted by some of the audience at his workshop, carried bodily away, and rolled down a hill; ceremonial copulation was used at another to demonstrate the uselessness of words.

I have no adequate record of the ideas generated by the conference, but a random few of them follow. An intercommune linkup of ham radio operators is proposed; already the Aquarian Family of San Jose has such a rig. And techniques of guerrilla radio (broadcasting from the back of a moving truck on unused frequencies) are discussed. A revolutionary magazine aimed at radicalizing straight society is planned: *America Now*. Liberation News Service, the underground AP, now mails its stories; the possibilities of a genuine wire service are explored. (Ken Kesey would reportedly do the job with trucks full of Pranksters, serving as town criers.) Plans are formed to share radio tapes, and three video tape makers in New York—Video Freex, Raindance, and Global Village—discuss a national data bank of tapes: "radical software." (Not clear how the tapes will be used—until video recorders become widely available and cable television opens the airways.) Practical information is

sought: a man from a New Haven radio station has broadcast an unpurgated Jerry Rubin speech. Does anyone know how to fight an FCC complaint? And forward-looking advice is proffered: the Penguin book *Civilian Resistance As a National Defense* will be useful in the days of repression sure soon to come.

At the outdoor meeting, Paul Krassner surveys the crowd and says, "Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah. I'm just trying to articulate the consciousness of the group." And defining the consciousness of the group is a problem. Has Goddard been transformed into "a fantastic energy center"? Is what is really being born here "an alternate circulatory system for information"? "A fantastic alternative to Time Inc."? Maybe, but obstacles intrude. Women's Lib is angry over a male-sponsored orgy the day before: "We'll call our own." And several speakers want to remind others not to be deceived by the green hills and sunshine. (Frank Oliver, counsel for the Chicago 15, says in a thick, deep voice, "Does any prudent person believe that a meeting like this one will be possible one year from now?") And unavoidable schismatic questions arise. Flowers or guns? Confrontation or counterinstitutions? Politics or transcendence?

Alternative media men, like virtually everyone else, find it easier to say who they are not than who they are; perhaps this is the chief reason that the journal I heard mentioned most often was not *A Different Drummer* or the *Berkeley Barb*, but the *New York Times*. Even at one of the Hog Farm's luncheons a girl with bare, tanned breasts stirred the soup in the iron kettle, and another girl chewed up carrots and spit them into the broth, remarking: "Tomorrow the *New York Times* will say 'Hog Farm Poisons Hundreds With Regurgitated Carrots.'"

One organization at the conference was devoted to specifying the differences between alternative and straight, and to offering regular criticism of the aboveground press, and to making gestures, at least, at subverting them. This is the "Media Project" (distinct from the Alternative Media Project), a New York-based coalition of people from various papers and from such nonprint media as Newsreel (the film-makers) and Radio Free People (producers of political radio tapes). The MP publishes a

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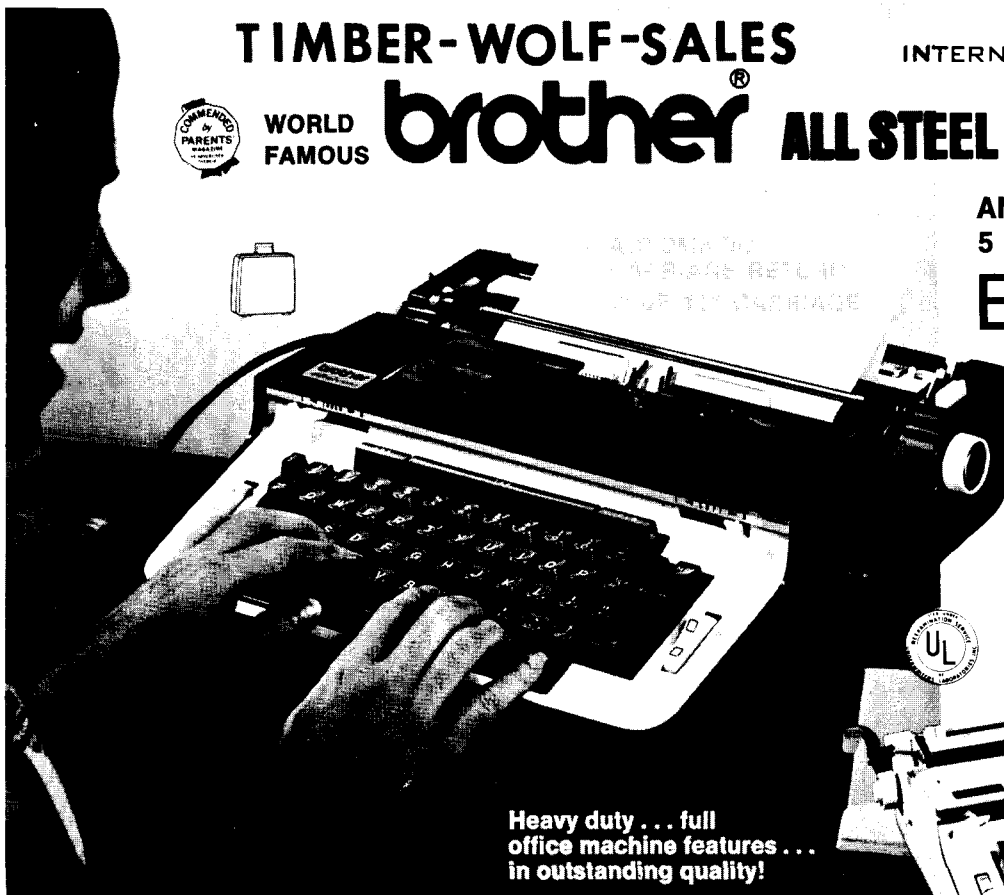
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paper of its own called *Pac-O-Lies*, which includes occasional unbylined pieces by straight media people.

I talked with one MP member, a man of thirty-five, who had worked in commercial television, but now is with Blue Bus, a film-making company that lives and works in a blue bus. "I was making \$20,000 a year," he said. "I had a house on Cape Ann. I had everything. I had *nothing*. I realized one day: I was shelling out \$5000 a year to kill people."

The man (who did not want to be identified) accompanied almost everything he said with a kind of incredulous laugh, a sound that seemed to express gratitude at being the survivor of an accident that might have been fatal. He said that he contrasted his actions with those of many of his relatives who were victims of the Nazis in Germany. "Fifty-four people in my family went right into the gas chambers thinking everything would be all right if they just kept their mouths shut."

I promised him that if I quoted anything I would quote the Media Project's statement on the occasion of the conference. ("I trust you as a person," he had said, "but I don't trust the place you work for.") The statement appeared with a drawing of the RCA Victor logotype ("His Master's Voice"):

This is a conference about alternative media.

We are participants in the conference who are part of the media of the political left.

We feel that for media to be a true alternative, they must be tools to build and struggle toward an alternative society. The struggle is for a society in which power is in the hands of the people. Media which create that society must also be in the hands of the people.

All media are political. The same forces control the media that control all other institutions. True alternative media do not undermine the people's culture by making the culture a commodity. True alternative media undermine the institutions of oppression.

The Media Project published a critique of *Newsweek's* cover story, early this year, on the Black Panthers. The text of the article is reproduced on the page and a running commentary follows it, in the manner of a gloss to a page of poetry. It is an in-

teresting document, though it demands some complicated quoting.

The *Newsweek* piece begins: "They were the Bad Niggers of white America's nightmares come chillingly to life—a black-bereted, black-jacketed cadre of street bloods risen up in arms against the established order."

The MP responds: "This article reduces serious political movements to theatrical productions produced solely for the benefit of the media."

Newsweek: "They are guerrilla theater masterfully done. . . ."

The MP: ". . . everything is transformed into a matter of style."

Newsweek: "It matters little to the national imagination that there are fewer than 1,000 of them or that their gift for getting shot considerably exceeds their gift for shooting."

The MP: "BULLSHIT."

Newsweek: "If the Panthers survive as a party, they will be powerfully indebted to the police. The Panthers have fared best when they have had a martyr—a Newton bound for prison, a Cleaver in flight—and Fred Hampton's death in bed in Chicago gave them the best martyr they have ever had."

The MP: "Read: If the Kennedys survive as a dynasty, they will be powerfully indebted to political assassins. The Kennedys have fared best when they have had a martyr—a Joe Kennedy Jr. killed in flight, a Joe Kennedy Sr. disabled by a stroke, a Jack Kennedy murdered in Dallas—and Bobby gave them the best martyr they have ever had"

"If you reacted to this as being in bad taste, and you didn't react to the parallel Panther paragraph, then you begin to understand the depths of your white supremacy."

Newsweek: [citing a Panther's remark] "I refer to crime as being the exploitation of poor people by filthy rich, money-mad, avaricious capitalist pigs. . . . Tabor had mastered his catechism well."

The MP: "Political analysis is called a catechism, an attempt to depoliticize the content of the Panther's program. . . . The black community has been raped by this country for 200 years. . . ."

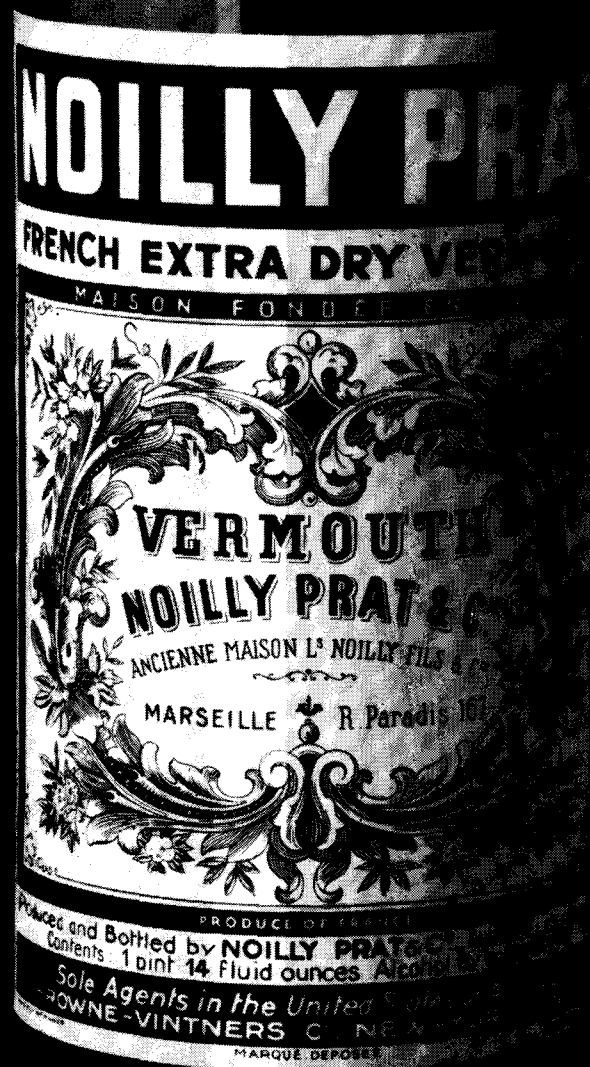
What to make of this exchange? All that seems truly clear is that no one—quoted Panthers or *Newsweek* or the Media Project—is engaging in something that ought to be called "political analysis." I don't want to enlarge that vacuum, except to admit for the record that *Newsweek's* political assumptions seem defensible to me (though they ought to be made

explicit), and that the Media Project's position (though it has the virtue of candor) seems to me simplistic at its best.

There are real issues here. One can feel several ways about the Panthers, and some of those ways allow for genuine outrage on hearing, for example, *Newsweek's* ironic remark that the Panthers have "a gift for getting shot." And yet, I think there is a useful way to read the Media Project's critique that has not much to do with politics (though I hear the MP calling this approach evil or naïve), except in the broadest sense of that term.

At least this much is true: reading the article, even as I cannot swallow the MP's ideology, I want to object, at virtually every moment they do, to *Newsweek's* treatment of the subject. Assuming one is less than outraged, what is it that is troublesome? What goes wrong, for instance, at that moment when *Newsweek* remarks on the Panthers' lucklessness at gunfighting? As it happens, the sentence is one on which the article turns. In a short space the Panthers have been reduced from a "black-jacketed cadre of street bloods risen up . . . against the established order," to performers of "guerrilla theater," to bumbler. The progression introduces *Newsweek's* unstartling argument: that the Panthers are something less than a menace, and that the police must share in the responsibility for the violence between them. But the menace that *Newsweek* debunks seems in some measure to have been invented by the magazine: those elaborately dressed Panthers at the start were made out of straw. It is true enough, as the MP charges, that *Newsweek* is preoccupied with the Panthers' style. And whether or not this amounts to "depoliticization," it is certainly a kind of gratuitous diminishment.

The nettling thing (whether or not you are a Panther devotee) is *Newsweek's* pretense at certainty. It is a pretense only, I think; sounds of stifled doubt recur in the piece, as in the edgy overkill of he "had mastered his catechism well." But the magazine speaks as if it were addressing an audience that will find nothing to argue about, that needs no persuasion. The reader is supposed to believe what the magazine believes; indeed, is supposed to know what the magazine knows. (Thus *Newsweek's* references to "bloods" and "Bad Niggers,"



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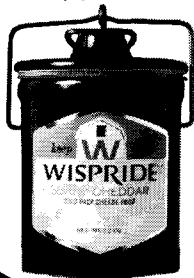
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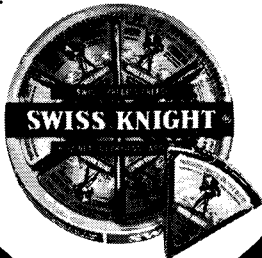
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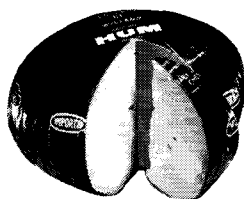
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which say to the reader, "We are all very familiar with this scene.") In fact, of course, many readers don't know, and are unsure of what they believe. The function of the article is to provide minimal information, and a way-to-think about the Panthers, but under the guise of stating what is obvious to thoughtful men. The method works against exploration and complication: the magazine is not unwrapping but packaging the Panthers.

But of course in its melancholic way the Media Project is doing much the same thing. Seeing the magazine and the MP at loggerheads (and yet with more in common than either would like to admit), it is interesting to wonder if only ideology separates alternative from straight. Could the underground press have flourished these past years without the political provocations that are its central subject? My point is that it *should* have flourished; there are reasons for its existence that are more complex than "capitalism" or "racism," and that will no doubt remain when Vietnam and the Panthers are memories.

One reason is that we lack a common voice. It is true that phrases move from NBC to Wyoming with unprecedented speed, become universal clichés, and evanesce ("Would you believe . . . ?" "Middle America"). But who has hold of a way of speaking that begins to be adequate even to the daily experience of the society? You can hear *Newsweek* struggling to speak in a tongue shared by all who listen; you can hear an allied attempt on the objective pages of the *New York Times*, or on these pages. "We" live in a world where the only true sentence seems to begin with "I." I once heard a reporter for the *Times* defending the integrity of his job to a New York magazine editor. "I'll believe you," the editor said, "when they let you write in the first person." In this situation, the alternative media's opportunity is to allow the private voice to prosper and reinvigorate the larger language. Occasionally it does, and the MP should not, perhaps, be made to symbolize its brothers: its rhetoric (like the newsmagazines') only illustrates a characteristic snare, the temptation to create a set of beliefs, and ways of expression, that are all too symmetrically a "counter culture." While *Newsweek* cajoles, the MP throttles the reader; an alternative only in the sense that the other side of the coin is

"... some distortion of our own," Paul Krassner had said at the mass meeting, and lightly enough. Then, with what seemed to me sincerity, he offered a vision of communication in the longed-for future. He was taking off after some radicals who had played along with the system, made some money at it: the new media should be noncompetitive, and not personal showplaces; they are not for profit or ego-tripping, but all and only for the good of the movement. "What the revolution is all about," he said, "is making no distinction between your private and your public life."

Whatever "the revolution" may gain from our loyalty, who cannot hear the personal invitation of that remark, who has not felt a longing for the condition it implies? Freedom from compromise, from mincing distinctions, from a life lived in compartments; a wholeness of mind and purpose; *authenticity*. There is, though, a distance to go between here and authenticity, and questions about the route: Is, say, the Media Project's orthodoxy freedom enough for you? And can you lose your self in confidence that there's another waiting to be found? Well, no need to be abstract: consider the last event of the conference.

Held in Goddard's rather opulent library, a multilevel structure with stark stone walls and plush, bright-colored carpets, the last session is a workshop on "Cartoons and the Mass Consciousness": in the nature of things that the final meeting should not be planned as a summary, but natural too that it should, in a way, take on that function. The discussion ranges far.

—It is pointed out that radical art may be pasted irremovably onto glass windows with a concoction made of Carnation milk.

—A boy leaps into the center of the rough circle of participants, screaming, at first incoherently, until he yells in explanation: "I am the freak man! I am the freak man!" He is wrestled to the ground. A girl says afterward, "I love you for doing your own thing."

—Clapping, in an approximation of their rhythm, occurs as two couples make love in the center of the discussion. Later, one of them explains that an invasion was once headed off somewhere, China perhaps, when the women gave themselves to the attacking army.



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—Capitalism may be *used* to the advantage of the revolution, it is argued. "To say 'use capitalism' is to extend a logic that doesn't work," it is countered. "What do you want? Nam in Day-glo?"

—A considerable debate occurs on whether to cover the walls of the new library with graffiti. Only the cleaning ladies will suffer, someone says. "Hip the ladies, off the school," a voice responds . . .

At moments like this the mind often turns into a camera, saving judgment for later. Had I been doing a film of the couple who, toward the end of the workshop, were making love on the floor, I think I would

have resorted to a lot of stylized editing—perhaps beginning the sequence with the girl's blond head flung sideways, her gasps, her partner's twitching, thrusting buttocks; and back then to the unhasty preparations and to the friend of the couple who bent over to talk to them as they began; and finally to the girl's face as she stood, still naked, afterwards (though it would have been right to prepare for this with the quickest cut), her lips tremulously holding a cigarette, her face abruptly uncertain and inward. The point of all this, I guess, would have been to suggest that the distinction between public and private life is not often a thing to surrender.

JOHN HERSEY AT YALE

by Richard Gilman

LETTER TO THE ALUMNI
by John Hersey
Knopf, \$4.50

Several years ago I was a melancholy participant in one of those symposia which provide writers and thinkers with the opportunity to justify their activity. This one was called "The Future of Intellectual Institutions," which very quickly came to mean colleges and universities. The thing that struck me most about the proceedings was that most of the professors in attendance were really much more concerned with their own futures than with that of learning, although they paid enough lip service to that. Natural enough, one might say; we're all territorialists of one kind or another, anxious about sheer survival, and going on to defend things beyond ourselves only when we feel our bases are secure.

The irony, of course, is that to protect oneself at the expense of new reality often turns out to be no protection at all. Revolutions succeed in precisely such atmospheres. Or the hollowest victories are achieved: material preservation with all the lights out; a stabilized but deracinated environment; traditions reigning over emptiness. Such a future, if there is to be any at all, is what is likely to come about on our campuses if powerful entrenched segments of faculties and administrations go on putting physical continuity and sanctified

modes of procedure before any true purpose and rationale of education. And the university, in this regard, can be taken as the microcosmic image of our entire American society.

This is the real, if only marginally stated, theme of John Hersey's important and in some ways remarkable new book. Hersey, who has just finished a five-year stint as master of Pierson, one of Yale's twelve residential colleges, has made a practice of writing an annual report to the house's alumni, and this year he has manifestly had the most extensive, violent, and complex kinds of material to work with. Culminating in Mayday on New Haven Green, the last few months of the academic year at Yale were filled with wayward, confusing, depressing, and exhilarating events of enormous significance, which it's Hersey's purpose here to describe and analyze for a far wider audience than the book's ostensible one.

For anyone who, like myself, was engaged to any degree in these events, what happened is badly in need of being sorted out, clarified, de-mystified, and placed in perspective. How much more pressing is this need for all those to whom the occurrences were made known in the clouds of rumor and the distortions of second- and third-hand witness? This past spring at Yale was badly reported, and one intention of Hersey, who was strategically placed near the center

of the entire crisis, is to set the factual record straight. He does this swiftly and cleanly, being free then to move on to his main business, an impassioned and sometimes eloquent plea for understanding of the dissident and fired-up students at Yale and elsewhere, and a defense, turning into a eulogy, of the role of Yale president Kingman Brewster, to whom the book is dedicated.

Hersey begins with the flat declaration that "at the instant I set this down [Yale is] quite simply the best private university in the country and . . . this is so at least partly because Kingman Brewster Jr. is the best university president in the country." (A statement like this isn't one I'd feel comfortable making, but I don't mind saying that Brewster is nearly as good a university president as I can imagine.) To jump on Brewster for his failure to "crack down" on dissidence and for his now famous expression of skepticism about the possibilities of a fair trial for black activists in America seems to Hersey the height of absurd wrong-headedness, just as he sees "the ecstasies of vituperation into which some [of the alumni] were thrown" as standing for "one side of a terrifying rift in our country."

Everything that happened during Yale's radical season was bound up with the occasion for Brewster's remark: the impending trials for murder of Lonnie McClucas and other Black Panthers, including the national chairman, Bobby Seale. That McClucas' trial, which did not actually begin until the summer, has resulted in a verdict which nearly everyone does consider fair ought not to be allowed to invalidate retroactively the atmosphere of crisis and alarm of those spring days; it may in fact be, as Hersey implies, that the atmosphere itself put pressure on the judge and jury to move beyond the bias which is so widely present in America.

In any case, Hersey outlines—with entire accuracy, I think—the constituents of the crisis, finding the main ones to be the aftermath in student consciousness of the Chicago conspiracy trial, the nationwide police attacks on the Panthers, and the increased tension between Yale and New Haven's black community, which had been asking harder and harder questions about the university's responsibility for the quality of the life around it. The scheduling of the trial



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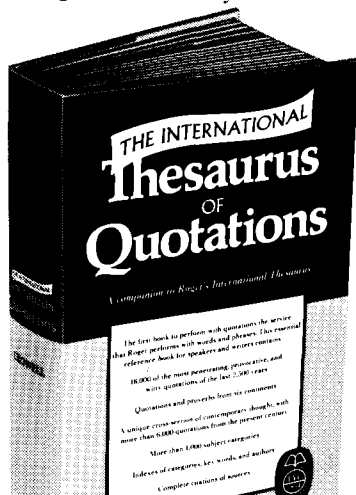
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in a courthouse a few hundred yards from the edge of Yale was the catalyst that set everything in motion.

When, in the pretrial proceedings, two Black Panthers, not defendants, were sentenced to six months for a minor courtroom ruckus, Yale found the immediate occasion from which to launch its diffuse and complicated radicalization. At a meeting in Ingalls Rink (Hersey's description of which as "the hairiest [and most influential] instance of action theatre I have ever witnessed" I fully endorse), some 4000 students and several hundred (mostly junior) faculty members were subjected to violent harangues by Panthers and their supporters. The evening was the most inextricable fusion of truth, myth, exploitation of white guilt, and aggrandizement of black aspirations, and it resulted in a desire for action which can only be baffling or repellent to those for whom social existence requires nothing more than mere continuity. The great majority of those present felt now that their vague liberal desire to "do something" had finally converged with the opportunity and, in fact, the hard obligation to do it.

From then on the drama quickly unfolded, full of bad or inept scenes, without a clear plot, ugly in some respects (the pressure toward radical conformity, the threats and small instances of violence), but ultimately, and in its deepest reality, inspiring and, as Hersey says, characterized by a besieged but authentic love. The strikes and "re-evaluations" of normal academic procedures, the movement of the students toward the city in an attempt to plead the Panthers' case, the opening up of true communication between the students and some of the faculty, all this was on the side of the angels, whatever demons also had their pitchforks into things.

Mayday was the climax. Fears among all of us that some incalculable disaster was likely turned out to be unreal; the day passed with a minimum of violence and in group action that displayed, as Hersey argues, the possibilities of peaceful, and useful, protest. He sees the elements of this unexpectedly benign outcome as the responsible leadership of the Panthers in holding their more hot-headed supporters in check, the presence of an enlightened police chief, James Ahern of New Haven, and the frequently

magnificent work of the Yale marshals—faculty members and students clearer than ever about the necessity for action but with their backs to, at least temporarily, the seductions of violence.

Turning back to the situation on campus, Hersey concedes that the Mayday unity may be misleading. Some of the faculty, especially its senior members, experienced feelings for the students ranging from "distaste to loathing," which Hersey sees as stemming from the threat to their "professional convictions and comfortable habits." He recounts an incident in which, after the emergency faculty committee appointed by Brewster at the height of the pre-Mayday action had met with aggressive and unaccommodating student representatives, an older professor confessed that he "felt emasculated . . . noting what had happened to the 'authority' of the older generation." But the man, Hersey goes on, had offered "an obsolete formulation. He and Brewster and the rest of us had not been castrated; we had been taught."

The education gained there and throughout the spring had to do with matters that are troubling the best and most open students:

If one were to try to isolate what students hate most these days, I think one would have to settle on bureaucracy.

Much of what makes university education seem irrelevant to students stems from the way disciplines and "subjects" are defined. The baronial castles of the academic departments stand firm against thoroughgoing efforts to rethink the structure of knowledge.

Students want more courses that open windows to feeling—more film, more music, more writing, more photography, more doing, more helping. A pressing question for our universities, which had better start at least *thinking about feeling* before they are engulfed by anti-intellectualism coming at them from two sides—from their own students and from the philistines.

Universities have the double task of defending scholarship and opening up new forms.

If none of this is new, what makes it important is, first, that it comes from a man like Hersey, a traditionalist in his own writing, a genteel, wholly respectable humanist; and, then, that it comes with the force of



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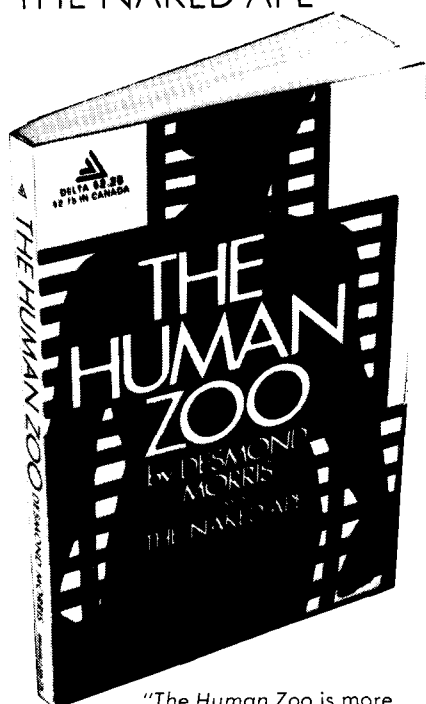
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experience and not as the rhetoric of an ideologue. More than this, Hersey's book is remarkably free of both self-righteousness and condescension, the rarest phenomenon in these days of the manipulation of causes by egos. And finally, more than any other writing on the subject that I know of, Hersey's book concerns itself with the inner, nonpolitical conflicts and sufferings of the young without using them to exonerate the political order.

If I say now that my admiration for *Letter to the Alumni* recedes a little as Hersey turns at the end from analysis to prescription, it may simply be that convincing prescription for such maladies as ours is even rarer than unself-righteousness about them. At any rate I find Hersey's argument that "the two essential elements of a tolerable future will be an atmosphere of trust and decentralization of power" not very useful, and his reiterated plea for "decency" not very profound.

When he writes that "this decency is a scared-ass* hard-learned clear-headed integrity, a surprised realization that the self is not all bad, so other selves may be the same, may be approachable," I hear the note of earnest, quasireligious, almost naïve willingness that has always characterized American impulses of reform and that is not made any tougher or more sophisticated by wishing that it be "hard-learned" or "clear-headed." I think we're going to need something more painful, difficult, and even sacrificial than that. But at least—and it's more than a little, as I hope I've made clear—Hersey has given us an exemplary statement of consciousness in regard to what we're going to have to be sacrificial about.

* Throughout the book Hersey employs a good deal of hip or nitty-gritty language, along with his loftier diction; it strikes me as a somewhat awkward but honorable attempt to fuse two disparate environments, the hemispheres of our sundered society.

MOVIES

NEW YORK BLUES

by David Denby

JOE

directed by John G. Avildsen
Cannon Group

DIARY OF A MAD HOUSEWIFE

directed by Frank Perry
Universal Pictures

"So much of 'official' American culture has been cheaply optimistic that we are likely almost by reflex to take pessimism as a measure of seriousness." This observation was made by Robert Warshow in 1952 when almost every movie ended in a burst of affirmation. Now that for the first time the mainstream of American movie-making has turned toward a pessimistic view of American life, it is still true as a description of the common response: the audience is generally respectful before a movie that presents a "negative" image of American society, criticizes an institution like the Army, or dissects a hopeless marriage. (Generally, but not always. A healthy minority of the audience and critics have been complaining steadily about such stupidly

conceived or even incoherent "serious" movies as *Medium Cool*, *Zabris- kie Point*, and *Catch-22*.) Perhaps we shall eventually arrive at the common-sense position that pessimistic movies can be as false (or as true) in as many ways as optimistic ones, but we are not there yet: two of the most harshly unpleasant movies of the summer, *Joe* and *Diary of a Mad Housewife*, both set in New York, received many rave reviews and became box-office hits, beneficiaries of the reflex that Warshow was describing. I don't think either of these movies is "serious," if we mean to convey by that word the quality of movie art.

In New York, which always seems on the verge of some unspeakable breakdown, and where the daily routines can take on the aspect of a bitter struggle, movies like these make contact with a rather large, cynical section of the population that prides itself on living totally without illusions. In these abrasive pictures, almost everyone speaks brutally to everyone else, and the human relationships are

corrupt. The characters may be as depressing as stale subway air, but when they admit that their lives are terrible, the audience chuckles, and the pessimism and defeat become almost comforting.

Joe employs the structure of standard melodrama, but the men who made it are too hip and knowing to balance out good against evil in the old-fashioned way. In this sordid shocker the characters represent opposing forces and values which are *all* criminally corrupt and evil. The good has been completely dropped out, and the result is some kind of savage melodrama of the future, without romance or beauty. Yet the movie certainly isn't trash; the details are too carefully worked out, the general level of awareness too high; it's as if the editors of *Esquire* had labored over a story from *The National Enquirer*.

The original screenplay by playwright Norman Wexler brings together a \$60,000-a-year advertising man and a \$160-a-week factory worker in a murderous compact against what they perceive as the common enemy: hippies. The relationship begins in a bar when the executive (named Bill Compton) inadvertently reveals to a bigoted drunk (*Joe*) that in a fit of rage he has murdered his daughter's lover, a hippie drug-dealer. *Joe* is intrigued and openly admiring: he loathes hippies himself (also "niggers") but has never "done anything" about them; he pursues Compton and the two become friends, male solidarity triumphing over social differences. Together they scour New York's East Village for Compton's runaway daughter; stumbling around in restaurants and stores whose services are an utter mystery to them, they are finally picked up by a group of predatory hippies who turn them on, offer them girls, and rob them. They track the kids to a commune upstate, and, with guns from *Joe*'s "well-balanced" collection, massacre the entire commune, innocent and guilty alike—including, by accident, Compton's daughter. At the end of several showings in New York young people were heard shouting, "Next time we'll shoot back, *Joe*!"

Almost any movie with something going for it generates goodwill, but the skill of a malicious rabble-rouser like *Joe* is actually dismaying. It was made on a \$300,000 budget by the

Ask the man who owns one.



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Cannon Group, an independent film company in New York run by men in their mid-twenties who have carved out a commercial niche for their firm with Swedish erotica. These men know how to spend money without waste. The actors, selected rather crudely for physical type, are practically unknown, and director John G. Avildsen (who used to make nudies) did the location photography himself. His work as a photographer is business-like and plain; I admired the way he captured the particular decor of places like Compton's office, the dealer's pad, and Joe's home in Queens, without restlessly panning into every corner. After so many movies with jumbled time sequences, it's pleasurable to be reminded of how efficient chronological sequence can be for building suspense. Considered strictly as narrative, the story is well told.

Joe is an attempted parable of the Nixon-Agnew constituency: it proposes a class collaboration between the upper and lower reaches of the silent majority, a collaboration sustained not for economic reasons, but to protect basic social forms and ward off psychic panic. Avildsen and Wex-

ler almost make this heavily thematic relationship plausible (and also avoid obvious sentimentality) by showing how deep the class differences go in matters of furniture, food, social style, and speech patterns, how really awkward and difficult it is for Joe and his wife to talk to Compton and his wife, and vice versa. Very few American films have been so thoroughly candid and nastily intelligent about class.

Unfortunately, Avildsen and Wexler haven't the generosity of mind to go with their daring. They gleefully combine odd elements—upper and lower class, straight and hip—to see how large an explosion they can produce.

Their intention is to condemn these adults: they are lousy parents and hypocrites as well, obsessively fascinated by the life-style which is threatening to take their children's allegiance away from them. The two men hate hippies because they can't have the freedoms—drugs and screwing—that the kids have. Psychological formulas substitute for any fuller sense of humanity. Even Compton's love for his daughter is shown as

sick—a repressed sexual desire that he represents to himself as parental solicitude.

The hippies on their part are merely vicious. The daughter's lover, a junkie parasite, is perhaps the vilest character in recent American films, and Avildsen stages his death as the slaughter of a repulsive animal. Thus we are shown that the older people may have good reason to worry about their kids or dislike hippies, but even this concession to fairness has its opportunistic purpose: in the flat confrontation between hung-up adults and loathsome youth, Avildsen exaggerates what each group finds hateful in the other, a device which allows him to extend cultural and generational hostility into a mass murder.

It's true that Godard also went all the way in sections of *Weekend*, and I wouldn't make any great case for his humanity, only for his art. Working in the style of surreal farce, Godard's exhilaratingly free imagination raised the conflicts to the level of visionary metaphor. The depredations of *Weekend* were witty, the liberation from questions of motivation and consistency a triumph of style. But in *Joe* we are stuck on the grinding plane of melodrama, where we notice the contrivances and shifts that set up the sensational denouement.

Joe is too undeveloped and crude to be considered a success as a political film, and since the film-makers also handle the human conflicts crassly, failing to open their subject to any emotion but horror, I finally concluded that the picture was an example of hip *Schadenfreude*, a big joke at the expense of crazy America. Putting some feeling into a movie may expose one to the risk of absurdity, of being square, but who wants to see many movies as cold as this one? Last year's low-life chronicle, *Midnight Cowboy*, had some gratuitous and even decorative bits of sordidness, but the movie generated warmth in the friendship of Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight—a suggestion of what might emerge from the general demoralization if given the chance. As a character Joe is that recurrent liberal nightmare, the American as vigilante, a compound of ranting obsession, menace, and obscenity. He used to turn up in secondary roles as a Terry Southern parody, but now he walks center stage with such lines as "Fucking hippies—I'd like to kill one." Yet because Joe

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is free to use the obscenity that audiences love to hear, because as a character in a movie he's rather *entertaining*, audience sympathy stays with him most of the time. At the gut level of existence his complaints are occasionally funny and eloquent, and when his obscenity cuts through the phony, condescending solicitude of Compton's wife, we are supposed to find him admirable.

In combination with the spineless Compton, whose character is so smooth it seems all but worn away, Joe is a powerful force, ruling the older and wealthier man at every point of difference (the script suggests that Compton's flabbiness is exactly what allows him to succeed in advertising). Unfortunately, the acting overemphasizes the character traits. I was not bowled over by Peter Boyle as Joe; nevertheless, the performance is so busy and detailed—with wolfish grins, burps, and pursed lips à la Brando—that Boyle easily dominates every scene with Dennis Patrick, who looks right for the part of Compton (silver hair and tanned, sagging flesh) but delivers his lines with dull soap-operatic pauses and low "confidential" tones. Impatience with Patrick as an actor grows so great that one longs for Joe to do something to move the scene along. For many reasons, then, Joe comes close to being a hero; when we are suddenly forced to see him as a hopeless psychopath, it seems a cheat, an arbitrary betrayal of our moderate affection for him and our sense of what he is.

Of course the real purpose of that final slaughter may have nothing to do with Joe's character or anything else in the movie. Since the victims include Compton's daughter, I suppose one could extract some kind of unconvincing irony about violence always hurting oneself in the end, but I really think the scene refers to something outside the film. *Joe* was the second picture of the summer to end with multiple murders in a house (the other was *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*). Once something like the Tate murders happens, and is constantly being discussed and written about to the point where it becomes a mass public obsession, the subject becomes "possible" for the movies. No matter how repulsive the event, film-makers are willing to take a crack at what the audience has been unreeling over and over in its mind.

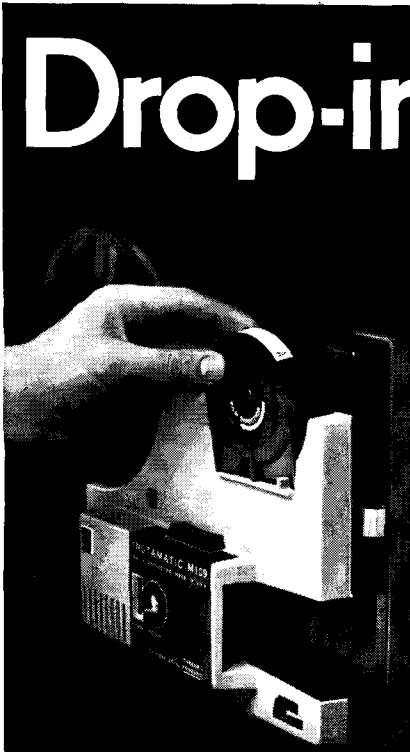
They still think dirty at the Cannon Group. For many reasons—incoherence, moral and emotional obtuseness, opportunism—*Joe* qualifies as a part of the social pathology it appears to condemn.

The troubled characters of *Joe* and *Diary of a Mad Housewife* haven't been allowed the freedom, largeness, and strength that would make their failures count for very much or really move us. Failure seems to be one of their identifying characteristics, an element in their makeup as representative social types. As people with hangups, they have been created for an audience that knows all about them in advance, an audience drenched in movies, plays, television, and the heavily psychological and sociological magazine journalism of the sixties. When this audience applauds the "reality" of such characters, what it really appreciates is the thoroughness of its education in mass culture, an education that extends even to the way people in each social group may be self-deceived or disturbed. The representative mental problems very easily get absorbed into the stereotype. A knowing audi-

ence should liberate film-makers from having to explain everything, but not from the task of creating complex human beings. Without such people in our movies, there's hardly a chance of art, and our pessimism is sure to be trivial and shallow.

Diary of a Mad Housewife is the sixth film by Frank and Eleanor Perry. (She writes, he directs. Their films include *David and Lisa*, *The Swimmer*, and *Last Summer*.) This one is a mixture of the suffering-women pictures of the forties, ladies' magazine fiction from any time, and television-style satire from today. It looks as though all you have to do is give this kind of material some contemporary reference and put in a little rough bedroom talk, and people will carry on as if the definitive statement about marriage in our time has been made. As always, the Perrys imprison their people in a kind of brutally reductive psychology; three infantile adults flounder about within the narrow confines of their problems, and the audience can alternately pity or sneer at all of them.

The housewife in the incomprehensible title (she's neither angry



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nor crazy), played by newcomer Carrie Snodgrass in her husky June Allyson voice, is unhappily married to a fatuous egotist—a social-climbing, name-dropping lawyer (Richard Benjamin); in desperation, she starts an affair with a “brilliant” young novelist (Frank Langella), but he also treats her badly, shuttling her in and out with other girls, until she finally informs him that he has been putting on a show of virility because actually he’s “a fag.” (“Right on!” a woman behind me shouted.) This “insight” comes out of nowhere and connects with nothing—a cocktail-party put-down which nevertheless carries great weight in Perryland, where unusual success with women is apparently a presumption of homosexuality.

Meaningless as the line is, it completes the fantasy of the much-abused woman who has been frustrated and cheated in every area of life; for her, even her lover is a fake. But if the Perrys are going to be so tough with everyone, why don’t they examine the housewife, too? We never do understand why she allows everyone to bully her (including the dogs!), and it’s embarrassing to be required to sympathize with an intelligent but helpless rich woman. Clearly the movie has been made for the same upper-middle-class people who are the subjects of the movie: who else would be impressed with the terrible misfortune of having an uppity Negro servant and a sloppy handyman to help the housewife-victim maintain a luxury eight-room apartment? The Perrys seem to be calling for her liberation, but oddly enough, only the worst sort of male chauvinist would be tenderly solicitous about such a mousy, uninteresting woman.

Through the Richard Benjamin character the Perrys try to satirize the type of fashionable, ambitious fake who hasn’t an idea of what he should really be doing with his life, but when Benjamin rattles off ten fancy labels in a row or haggles with a waiter over wines, he just looks like an ass. The element of self-consciousness and control which allows such men to become eminently successful in impressing other people is completely missing. As an actor, Benjamin makes his voice so heavily false that he seems to be signaling us with his distaste for the man he is playing so we won’t confuse him with the part. When it turns out that he has lost all his money in imprudent investments

(contrary to everything we’ve heard about his abilities), the trivialization of the character is complete. By artificially cutting him down to a pathetic near-bankrupt, the Perrys allow all those Richard Benjamin types who

are rushing to line up for the movie since it became a topic of fashionable conversation to conclude that the main thing wrong with their double is that he tried to move up before he was ready.

BALLET

THE MOISEYEV AND US

by Arlene Croce

The Moiseyev Dance Company, more properly known as the State Academic Ensemble of Popular Dance of the Soviet Union, has been with us again this past summer and fall, cleaning up on its fourth American tour. It hasn’t changed a bit in the twelve years since it first electrified American audiences, and the fact that it has not—while just about everything in American entertainment (and culture and religion and politics) has undergone fantastic and convulsive change—makes it something of a statistical wonder. The company, with its rosy peasant lads and lasses, its mechanical good cheer, its cornball repertory, is like nothing on the American scene; it’s the safest, healthiest, least censorable form of theatrical entertainment that we can get; and yet it’s a sellout from coast to coast, just like *I Am Curious (Yellow)*.

The element of spectacle that the Moiseyev offers—the spectacular feats of men who do split leaps eight feet in the air or turn like dervishes or kick out their legs in squats so often and so fast that their bodies become blurs—is of course perennially exciting and attractive even though it’s no longer the novelty that it was in 1958. But still one can’t help noticing how small a part of the show this sort of spectacle is; Igor Moiseyev, like the astute showman he is, keeps you waiting for it, and meanwhile, like the trained *Schlockmeister* he also is, he feeds you large amounts of worthless kitsch: dances of such exasperating coyness and damped-down sexual vitality that you’d think everyone in the Soviet Union had first been lobotomized and then gelded. The man-woman spectacle that the Moiseyev presents is just a cartoon, a sexless Silly Symphony. The roguish boys ogling blushing girls are about as edifying as the cowhands

of *Oklahoma!* would be to see today, and the Moiseyev’s hale young peasants are as ethnically believable as *Oklahoma!’s* lusty males, who sang, “We know we belong to the land / And the land we belong to is *grand*.” They’re all just grand.

A kind of juvenile senility that pervaded large areas of American popular entertainment in the thirties and forties is the peculiar atmosphere of the Moiseyev Dance Company; it is sickly and wholesome at the same time.

The Moiseyev can stun you and bore you and drive you wild with nostalgia, but one thing it can’t do anymore—it can’t make you angry about the state your own country is in. Its self-censorship is too politically motivated; and it embodies too much of the bad old Hays Office spirit of what used to be called “nice, clean family entertainment” to do more than prick your conscience about pornography—and yet it *is* clean and it is now and then exciting, too; very exciting. It is a company of stuntmen (with one or two stunt-, or stunted, women) who perform with automatic perfection the kind of acrobatics that win Olympic Gold Medals; they act with flourish and clown with abandon (offensively so in the lampoons of prerevolutionary society to which the program notes pin the name of Chekhov), and they are masters of that special art of dance-pantomime that creates a physical illusion on the stage. I have always wanted to see them in *Petrouchka*, where the leading characters are supposed to be made of wood and rags. The two American companies that revived the ballet this year weren’t even up to cliché level in the doll dances. The Americans had been overtrained in other more sophisticated techniques and were imaginatively dead to first principles.

The Moiseyev company does nothing so distinguished as *Petrouchka*, but it can make you see two boys wrestling when it's really one boy inside a specially constructed costume, and the Bolshoi repertory is full of crazy salon miniatures in which people change into birds before your eyes. Since belief in what you do is so large a part of the technique you have to do it with, I can't imagine American dancers attempting *Two Boys in a Fight* or *Queen Swan*, much less excelling in the attempt. Conjuring acts of this sort were a commonplace in the days when Americans thought that dancing, that art in general, had to represent something besides itself, but Russia is a philistine and puritan culture still. Who would have believed that the artifacts of such a culture, imported by one Sol Hurok, could possibly be so much fun?

We can enjoy the Moiseyev dancers even when they look as if they're trying to bury us. The best of the unholy-gee numbers is *Partisans*, a great little dustup of a showpiece about cloaked riders on a night patrol in the Caucasus, wheeling about the stage looking for Nazis. The cloaks are flung back, and we see that the wheeling motion, suggesting a motorized caravan, was brilliant dance illusion: the "riders" are on foot. A few moments later we get another surprise. During a sensational acrobatic shoot-out with the enemy, in which the male dancers of the company are more valiant than you can believe possible, a submachine gunner enters from stage right, spinning around the stage at top speed, *on his knees*. His cap flies off and we see that it's a girl. The finale is superb hokum, too: as the music resumes its brave little melody the caravan rides off, but first it circles the stage, and spotlights pick out little "character" vignettes: two men light cigarettes, another passes a flask, two more are having an animated conversation. The girl is a soldier like the rest.

Partisans is the closest that Igor Moiseyev comes to outright propaganda. It may sound terrible, but it isn't; it's glamorous with the glamour of preposterous fantasy, and much less intimidating than it used to be when it was given on the company's early tours. For one thing, we've landed on the moon and they haven't, and for another, the American anti-American chorus of the late fifties



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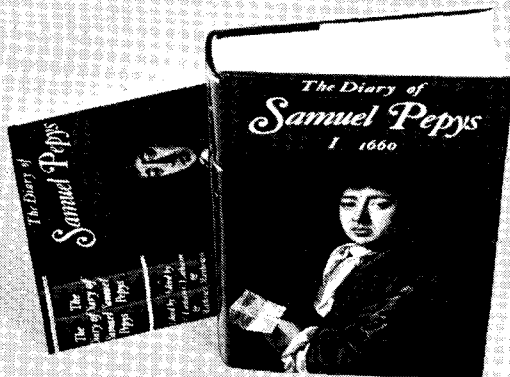
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and early sixties has turned from extolling Russian purity and vilifying American decadence to extolling American decadence and keeping mum about Russian purity. The Moiseyev's image is useless, now, to American self-denigration, and no one has yet mobilized a dance company of oriental Moiseyevs to scare us with visions of North Vietnamese purity.

Susan Sontag, writing a few years ago from Hanoi, marveled that male and female Viet Cong fought, but did not sleep, together. It was *Partisans* with a new slant.

When the Moiseyev dancers first came to America, the simple, healthy, clean-young-peasant look of everything they did made for a lot of abject comment on the comparative sickness of American culture. The Russians seized the propaganda point and ran away with it. On their return engagement, the Moiseyev had a number especially contrived for American audiences, a parody of rock 'n' roll called *Back to the Apes*. It was terrible, but American critics fell for it.

In 1961, intellectuals were still going through their period of contempt for American pop culture. Elvis Presley, Chubby Checkers, Dick Clark, radio deejays: it was all a sinister plot of Madison Avenue to exploit newly rich teen-agers who were, God knows, sinister enough in themselves. Yet when the Moiseyev went into its rock parody, American audiences laughed and clapped (as had Russian ones), first because it's always amusing to see what foreigners make of our mores, but also because the Russians seemed to be loosening up and rather clumsily enjoying themselves.

The teacher's-pet malice behind the parody didn't come through except to those who despised rock music simply for being popular, noisy, and above all orgiastic: the dregs of Forty-Second Street grind-house culture. "Pornographic" was the word for Presley; it was a pejorative. Dark comparisons were drawn between mass art in a democracy and the patently exuberant and vital "folk art" of a people who had been enslaved for nearly fifty years.

Maybe it's a good thing that these critics aren't around anymore to administer their standard dose of Old Bolshevik puritanism. One only wonders what they were doing there in the

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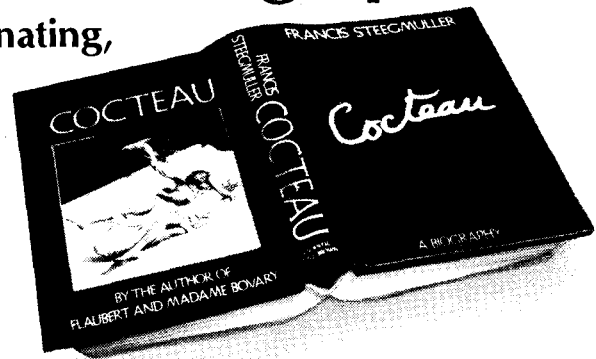


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first place, whooping it up for Stalinist pop culture. The cosmetic pseudo-folksiness of the Moiseyev's dances should have been ludicrously apparent to eyes sharp enough to detect decadence in Elvis Presley. It should have been obvious that the Moiseyev was the Soviet equivalent of the worst of Walt Disney or the best of Ed Sullivan (on whose show it scored a memorable triumph). The Moiseyev hasn't changed, but we have.

Like the terms "juvenile delinquent" and "junkie," Old Left moralizing, with its one-sided attack on popular culture, is a thing of the past. The trouble is that it has been replaced by nothing. The New Left's attack on everybody and everything is an attack, precisely, on nothing. And the swinging, middle-aged epigones of the New Left, having overdone the attack on youthful decadence in the fifties, are now overdoing their atonement. They've made, in fact, a kind of pop cult of rebellion complete with fads more freakish and attitudes more abrasive than anything to be found in the Peppermint Lounge. The big change started about 1963 (the sixties didn't become "the sixties" until the assassination of President Kennedy and the rise of the Beatles gave anti-Americanism a whole new *casus belli* but made rock music immune to attack on the left), and since then we've begun tasting the true, authentic, corrosive dregs of decadence, the filth of faddish indiscriminate alienation.

But none of this will be satirized by Igor Moiseyev because he has lost the patronage of the American Left. The tide has so far turned against the ebullient pie-faced puritanism of old-style mass entertainment that the continued popularity of the Moiseyev dancers no longer seems relevant or meaningful, no longer has the power to point a significant political moral.

The company's apologists have taken up other causes, the rock parody is forgotten, and while the dancers' fantastic prowess hasn't diminished, the burn is off it now. We don't even take very seriously anymore the claims of the dance critics that Igor Moiseyev's choreography is concerned with national character. "The soul of the people," a phrase used by Moiseyev on his first visit and widely quoted at the time, is seldom

invoked even by the people who would still like to attribute the energy of the performance to the spiritual zest of the Russian people. That kind of energy we can see in revivals of old American movies, in the lustiness and bravura and derring-do of old film musicals and Westerns and gangster melodramas and sword epics. The Russians possess this energy because their culture is keyed to it, as ours was thirty years ago. Wholehearted hamminess is simply *passé* in America. The Moiseyev comes to

THE WRITERS

Richard Todd is an associate editor of the *Atlantic*.

Richard Gilman, author and critic, teaches drama at Yale University. His new book, *Common and Uncommon Masks*, will be published early next year.

David Denby is a free-lance critic and a frequent contributor to these columns.

Arlene Croce is editor of *Ballet Review*.

Jay Jacobs is editor of *the Artgallery Magazine* and book editor of *Art in America*.

Edward Weeks and Phoebe Adams write monthly reviews for the *Atlantic*.

Pamela Alexander (page 58), whose first published poetry appeared in the *Atlantic* in July, is a recent graduate of Bates College in Maine.

Ugo Fasolo (page 94) is a Venetian poet, the charm of whose work has been re-created in English translation by Ezra Pound.

John Berryman (page 96) won a Pulitzer Prize for his poetry in 1965 and a National Book Award in 1969. His new volume, *Love & Fame*, will be published in mid-November.

Leslie Norris (page 110) is a Welshman who enjoys life and letters in his English home in Chichester.

us as if from another era; it knows nothing of camp, absolutely nothing (as it proved almost a decade ago in *Back to the Apes*) of the concept of cool.

The innocuous, simple world of the Moiseyev is still immensely attractive to large numbers of Americans who despair of the new contemporary chic. They'd like to get away from television, but they can't find a decent show or movie, and they haven't the patience or the taste for opera or the ballet. The Moiseyev—synthetic, vulgar, naïve, rather heartless but somehow rather grand, too—is safe entertainment, of the kind their parents knew.

At New York's Metropolitan Opera House during last season the aisles and lobbies were full of people who might easily have resented the cultural and political pressures of the early seasons, when Moiseyev openings were attended by Broadway stars, dance luminaries, and the likes of Paul Robeson and Mikhail Mentshikov, who would send champagne to Hurok in his box. All that is changed now; this year, according to the *New York Post*, "the Moiseyev Folk Ballet . . . hopes to see Buddy Hackett during their stay here." In Chicago tear-gas bombs were thrown, but as if to balance that unpleasantness, Igor Moiseyev has accepted an invitation to choreograph for an American company, the first Soviet choreographer to do so.

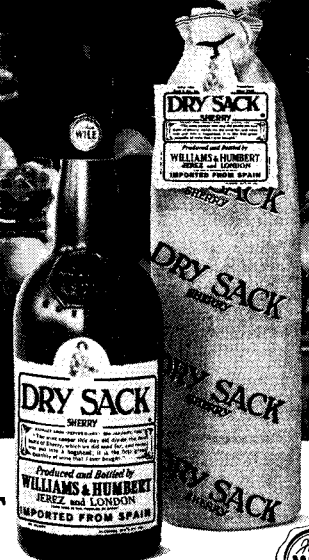
The Moiseyev company's passage through America this year was very much a 1970 scene, yet as one looked at the stage one seemed to be looking into the past. It was like watching a television hookup to Moscow, one of the earliest, from a booth at the 1940 World's Fair. If satellite communications had been possible then, Moscow would have sent us this show we've seen just this year and maybe asked for something in return. There were several marvelous nightclub dance troupes around at that time, going under the aggregate name of the Merriel Abbott Dancers, that we might have relayed, but the Abbott Dancers were too sophisticated: they would have given the Bolshoi a run for their money. No, there had to be something as clean and simple and phony and easy to love as the Moiseyev. Disney? He was too good then. We'd have sent them Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy.

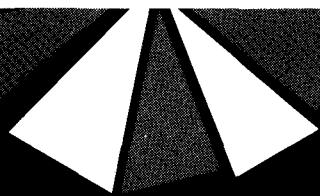
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ART

ART OUT OF APATHY

by Jay Jacobs

THE ART-MAKERS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

by Russell Lynes

Atheneum, \$20.00

The "pendulum of taste" is an altogether nebulous, but relentlessly metronomic, device that, in theory anyway, keeps the beat for the world's aesthetic Ins and Outs. Such a painter as El Greco, so the theory goes, is relegated to obscurity for a certain period while that big regulator in the artistic firmament swings in the direction of, say, a William Powell Frith or a John Everett Millais. Then, in the fullness of the backswing, this state of affairs is reversed.

Writers on major artists and art movements have little use for the pendulum of taste but put their money instead on what they like to call "the final judgment of posterity." Show me a writer on minor artists, though, and I'll show you a devout believer in the pendulum of taste.

The artists who people Russell Lynes's *The Art-Makers of Nineteenth-Century America* are, for the most part, minor figures. Predictably enough, therefore, Lynes observes in the course of his peroration that it is "time for the pendulum of taste to have made a full swing—from revulsion through tolerance back to sensible concern." Minor artists are not necessarily unimportant artists, and it is time some sensible concern was given to the "art-makers" of nineteenth-century America. It is arguable, though, whether much of the art Establishment's current concern for them is as purely a matter of renewed appreciation and refined sensibility as Lynes would have us believe. The art market always manages to "rediscover" a hitherto neglected group of peerless masters when its inventory of previously legitimized geniuses begins to dwindle; and this, I suspect, is at least in part what's happening in the case at hand; as supplies of old masters, impressionists, post-impressionists, and the so-called "modern masters" successively are rendered *hors de*

commerce, nineteenth-century American works—a drug on the market a few years back but now overlaid with a patina of respectability—suddenly loom large and gilt-edged on the aesthetic horizon.

In a way, it's all rather unfortunate because the real importance of most nineteenth-century American art lies, paradoxically, in its relative unimportance. As Lynes himself is quick to point out, nineteenth-century America's serious "art-makers" were men of talent and principle whose high aspirations were unattainable in a prevailing climate of apathy. And as a spate of recent writers has intimated, the ultimate tragedy of nineteenth-century indifference to the arts was not the mediocrity of much nineteenth-century painting, sculpture, and architecture, but the mediocrity of life as it is now lived. Had our illustrious forefathers paid even minimal attention to those few of their contemporaries who were concerned with the life-enhancing possibilities of aesthetic commitment, so the argument runs, we would not now be reaping the fruits of their indifference in the form of such latter-day amenities as urban blight, societal crisis, fouled waterways, corrupted air, impoverished land, coast-to-coast litter, and the ceaseless flood of instant junk with which our industrial technology so generously provides us. As one of those writers, Ada Louise Huxtable, remarks in *Will They Ever Finish Bruckner Boulevard?*:

People have been looking at the environment, as environment, for only a very short time. It has always been there, but it has finally been recognized as something that is terribly responsive to acts of will and judgment that have an endless impact on the state of humanity. . . . Esthetics is not some kind of optional extra or paste-on for pretty facades; it is the satisfaction of the needs of the body, the spirit and the senses through the way an environment looks and functions—two inseparable factors. Every social plan has a form, good or bad. The art of design is an unavoidable part of every urban decision. Until this is

understood as the planning process, and design is accepted as an inescapable determinant of the result, we will simply produce more environmental failures.

Unfortunately, aesthetics was deemed "some kind of optional extra or paste-on" in the era of which Lynes writes—an era that in retrospect turns out to have been crucial to the future shape and quality of the environment. As he remarks about much of the architecture produced while the Greek Revival lasted, it "was not an architecture at all but exterior decoration or stage-setting—boxes with white icing on them." And he goes on to say, "Trying to carve a place for the arts in the hearts of one's countrymen . . . was like chipping a statue out of a block of ice. It was a cold, hard thing to start with, and you could see what you had been to so much trouble to make melt before your eyes as soon as it took shape. It was a very rare citizen of the young republic who gave art a second thought, because almost no one gave it a first thought." Artists were swamped, as the early landscapist Thomas Cole grumbled, in "the tide of utility [which] sets against the fine arts."

The irony in all this is that from the late eighteenth century onward many American artists were absorbed with the perfection of utilitarian devices, and Lynes's book is almost as much a chronicle of compulsive tinkering as it is a history of art.

Charles Willson Peale, for example (who in the parlance of the sports pages set the record for Most Portraits from Life of George Washington by a Righthander: 14), was "a maker by temperament, manual dexterity, and inventiveness. There was scarcely anything, from saddles to clocks, from paintings to stoves and steam baths and false teeth, that he did not set his mind and hand to construct and improve upon"; Hiram Powers, who provided his contemporaries with a massive dose of slick vanilla titillation in the form of *The Greek Slave*, was an inveterate tinkerer who, according to the critic James Jackson Jarves, "has paid more attention to improving the tools with which he works than to developing his aesthetic faculty"; the genre painter William Sidney Mount was a lifelong gadgeteer whose inventions included a variety of musical instruments, a mobile painting studio, and a contraption designed

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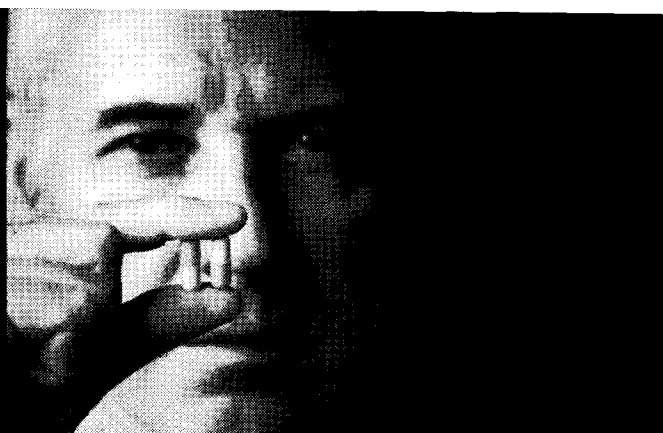
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"to increase the speed of vessels propelled by steam"; the sculptor Thomas Ball was also an inventor of musical instruments (including the zither, which to Ball's embarrassment turned out already to have been invented by someone else); and Thomas Eakins, one of the few indisputable giants among nineteenth-century American painters, was, according to Lynes at least, as influential in the development of the motion picture as was the more generally accredited Eadweard Muybridge.

All these manifestations of practical-mindedness notwithstanding, the American public seems to have decided—to its ultimate cost and with somewhat less than perfect logic—that its artists merited serious consideration only when they were not engaged in the pursuits they took most seriously. Moreover, the nineteenth-century artist was not only a practical man, but by nature a conventional one. As Lynes remarks, there was "a very great difference between the attitude of the artist toward the society in which he lived in the early 1800s and the attitude of the artist in revolt against society in the late nineteenth century in Europe and in the twentieth in America. The artist wanted to become a part of society, not a thorn in its flesh. . . . Furthermore, he wanted to be as good as other people, socially as acceptable in the parlors of the prosperous as any frock-coated politician or banker or real-estate speculator. The spectacle of the artist trying to make himself socially acceptable is one that can be watched far into the century."

It seems to me that the last observation is a bit off the mark. As it happens, it wasn't *social* acceptance that the nineteenth-century artist was denied (Lynes himself offers numerous accounts of artists mingling easily in rather distinguished circles), but *professional* acceptance. It is the spectacle of the artist trying to make himself professionally acceptable that can be watched until well into *this* century, when he finally abandoned the effort and adopted a defensive posture of bohemianism—a posture he still maintains a couple of decades after winning respect for his work.

The pity of all this is that while any artist worth the name can create despite social rejection—and even in the face of aesthetic hostility—it's a rare artist indeed who will flourish in a climate of apathy. This, unfortu-

nately, was the climate that prevailed throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, and it is only now, as the American Dream begins to look more and more like a nightmare, and as the most effective industrial juggernaut in history continues to lay waste the human environment and the human spirit, that the real failure of the nineteenth century assumes its full, horrifying dimensions.

What the "practical" men of the nineteenth century failed abysmally to realize was that aesthetics was not, in Lynes's phrase, "merely the icing on the public cake," but the leaven without which no really healthy civilization can rise. "The idea," Lynes writes, "that art was a superstructure on top of commerce rather than an essential part of the edifice of a culture was strong in the nineteenth century. It showed as plain as day in the romanticism and frivolities of architecture—the houses built to look like temples or like Gothic parish churches or like chateaux on the banks of the Loire. It showed in furniture that was appliquéd with carved griffins and fruits and roses, and in parlors set about with bric-a-brac and gewgaws that Mrs. Trollope called 'coxcomalities' and we call clutter. The veneer of the 'beautiful' had little to do with the realities of life or, indeed, with the moral, political, or intellectual substructure of the nation."

Russell Lynes is an author who likes his heroes, and he tends to see the indifference of the nineteenth century as a necessary element in the triumph of a few dogged men over adversity; to see it as a "cold climate" that, thanks to the persistence of a small band of true believers, finally warmed up. It is true that a handful of exceptional nineteenth-century painters, sculptors, architects, and environmental planners produced some notable works for a public that hardly could have cared less; these isolated instances, though, now begin to take on the poignancy of brilliantly conducted little skirmishes in a hopelessly lost cause. It little matters now whether a not-altogether-reliable "pendulum of taste" confers belated master's degrees upon a few nineteenth-century American "art-makers." In the long run the real importance of nineteenth-century American art is the overwhelming unimportance that was assigned to it as the future of America began to take its shape.

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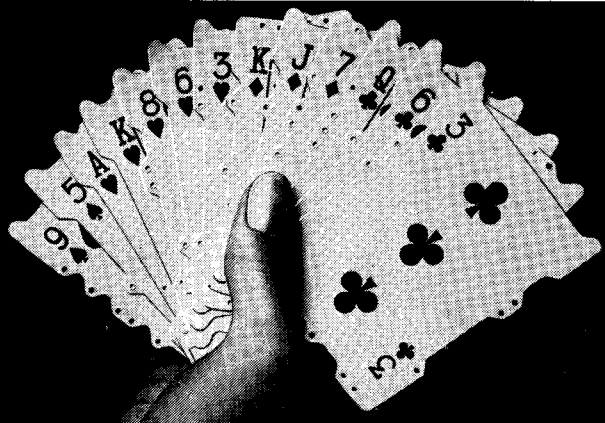


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THE PERIPATETIC REVIEWER

by Edward Weeks

THE WARTIME JOURNALS
OF CHARLES A. LINDBERGH
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$12.95

Charles A. Lindbergh, the "Lucky Lindy" of 1927, became an international hero at the age of twenty-five. It was not luck that brought him across the Atlantic, for he was and still is the most skillful aviator alive. Unlike the famous aces who survived the First World War, Major Bishop of Canada and Charles Nungesser of France, Lindbergh, with his cool, questing intelligence and inexhaustible vitality, continued to take a versatile, at times controversial, part in world affairs. His *Wartime Journals*, originally 400,000 words, have been shortened, but not retouched, in a volume which is surely one of the most surprising and readable revelations of a man of action. The entries, with a well-edited commentary, begin in the spring of 1938 when he and his talented wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, went to live on the tiny isle of Illec on the Brittany coast from which he took off in his private plane on trips to assess the air power of the European nations and the Soviet Union and, incidentally, to sample their intentions for war; they close in 1945 with his melancholy inspection of the Germany he so admired. In the writing three figures emerge: the incomparable aviator, the public figure so often harassed, and the private man, the last being the most likable.

The Lindberghs had sought refuge in Illec partly to escape from the American press and partly to be within walking distance—when the tide was out—of Charles's mentor, Dr. Alexis Carrel, the Nobel Prize winner. Lindbergh's press relations were never cordial and for this his naïveté is to be blamed: it seems not to have occurred to him that in winning the biggest cash prize in the sky he became news, and that the notoriety which followed was the price of what he had won. The newspapers' exploitation of the kidnapping and the trial was brutal, and as the journal shows he was embittered for life when he and Anne fled from Englewood. But on the island they

lived in peace: Anne was finishing *Listen! the Wind*, while he commuted to Paris, Berlin, or London; then, reunited, they walked the sands with their dogs, planted pines and cypress, bathed with young Jon, or dined with the Carrels and their friends. He read Lin Yutang, whom he knew and liked, Whitehead's *Adventure of Ideas*, Plato, Liddell Hart; in Paris he visited Despiau's studio to watch the sculptor working on a head of Anne; for her he bought her favorite flower painting by Vlaminck. Back on Illec they experimented in painting, and Charles began the first draft of his book *The Spirit of St. Louis*. They were in love with each other, and there is tenderness in these passages.

On his several visits to Germany in the 1930s Lindbergh, the public figure, had been impressed by what he saw in the factories and what he heard from designers like Messerschmitt, and by the time he was decorated by Goering he was convinced that the Nazis were invincible in the air. By contrast he was appalled by the disorganization of France (October 1, 1938: "There was not, and is not, in France one fighting plane as fast as the latest German bombers!") and by the lethargy in Britain ("England . . . has been asleep. . . . Aviation has largely destroyed the security of the Channel, and her superiority of manufacture is a thing of the past"). He accepted the "absolute necessity for a changed attitude toward Germany if a disastrous war is to be avoided," and in this he was confirmed in his talks with Nancy Astor at Cliveden, with Ambassador Kennedy (a man "of constructive influence"), and Bill Bullitt, our Ambassador in France. While he was posing for Jo Davidson the talk centered on Chamberlain, and the sculptor, so Lindbergh wrote, "thinks I always see and talk to the wrong people."

Was it anti-Semitism or his Swedish heritage which made him so uncritical of Germany? His mistrust of FDR deepens with each entry, but there is never a word about the gangsters around Hitler. When he and Anne brought the family back to the States

he threw himself strenuously into the reorganization of our air power as a consultant to General "Hap" Arnold; and the men he confided in were Herbert Hoover, Fulton Lewis, General Wood, Senators Byrd and Borah. Build up our defenses, he argued, but remain strictly neutral even if France and England go down the drain. The German fortress could not be breached. In this he was credulous and wrong.

Lindbergh says that we lost the war. The notion that anyone wins a world war is obsolete. Britain lost an empire, already doomed, but maintained its integrity by standing alone. India, Norway, Denmark, and Holland learned the power of passive resistance. France cured a paralyzing rupture. The West, Germany included, was freed from the beastliness of an avenging fanatic, and at war's end we devised the oxygen tent of Marshall Aid. Was this worth the terrible sacrifice? I think so, considering the alternative.

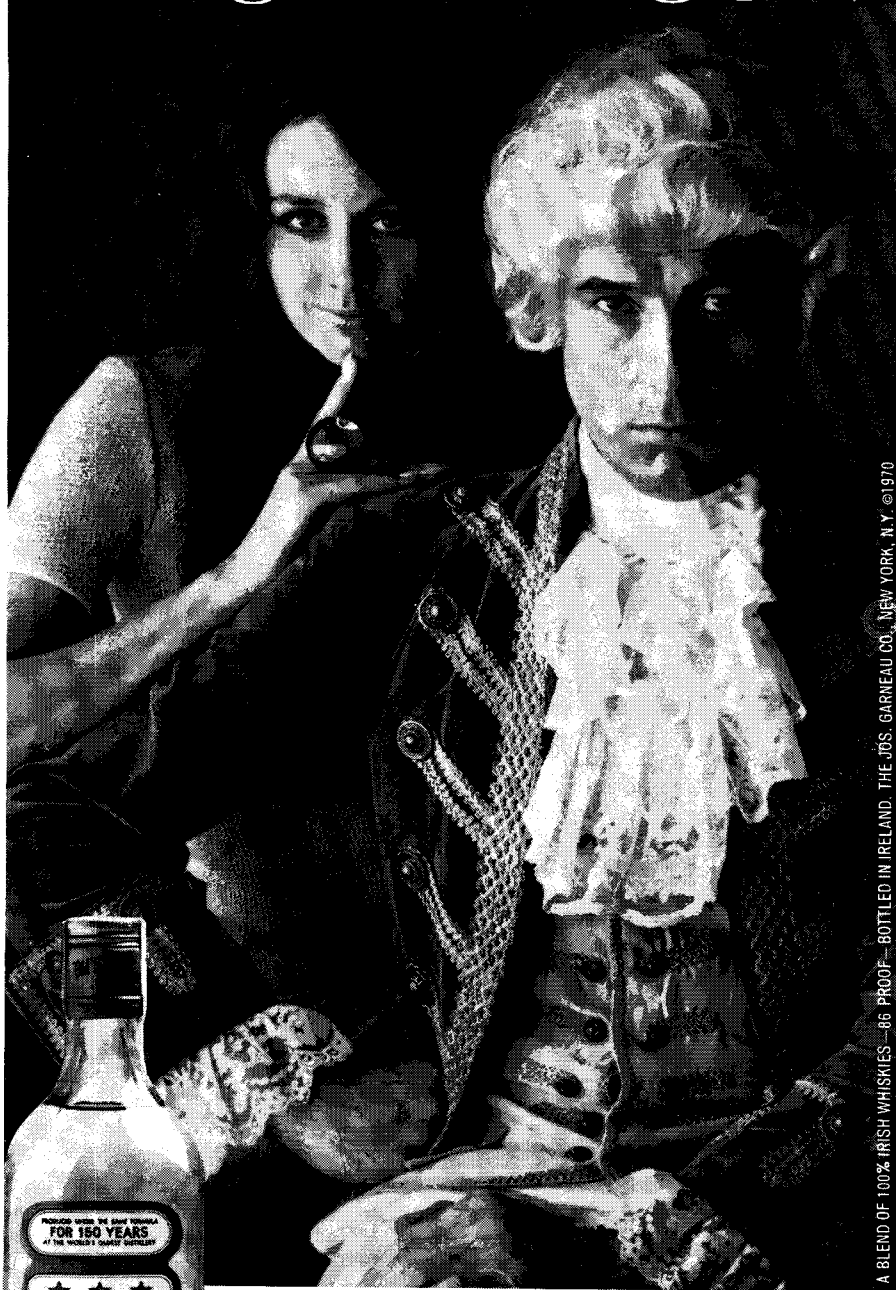
His devotion is more explicable than his politics: his devotion to Dr. Carrel, who led him into his experiments in biology; to Dr. Robert Goddard, the pioneer of space rockets; to Orville Wright, whose plane he helped recall and place in the Smithsonian; his devotion to his mother, which shows in many a touching allusion; and his devotion to the grandeur of earth and sky. Flying alone to an appointment, he suddenly realized that he had not eaten for hours and that there was a can of beans in the baggage compartment. "I pulled the back off both seats and let the plane fly itself," he wrote, "while I leaned and wiggled back far enough to reach the can."

Only professionals will appreciate the many passages about his testing of war planes and the missions which he himself flew in the Pacific. But one skips at the risk of missing his moments of exhilaration. "I love being alone over mountains and in clouds and rain, with sunshine above and moist earth below." One may differ with Charles Lindbergh, but one cannot question his sincerity or his eagerness for life.

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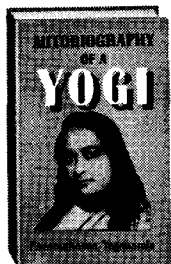
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power in the affairs of men and the urgent necessity of their being understood. In *Pieces of the Action* Vannevar Bush has written the sixty-year record of his personal involvement in actions, some of them as momentous as the preparation of the atom bomb and some as testy and amusing as his confrontation with Winston Churchill. "Van" Bush, as he is affectionately known, is a Yankee from Provincetown who came up to Tufts College with a salty disposition, immense vitality, and a quick, original mind. He worked briefly for the General Electric Company "testing quite a lot of valuable machinery on \$14 a week," and when he was fired, resumed his studies, received his doctorates from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the same day, and began to teach.

When he was called to Washington as president of the Carnegie Institution, he extended his knowledge of science and industry, and, incidentally, had the chance to observe the often sensitive relations between the Executive and the Congress. Thus he was well placed for his wartime assignment as head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, in which he directed a team of many thousands of scientists, engineers, and physicians, the brainiest aggregation ever assembled for a common purpose in this country. He knew where to find the best men, made room for the talented refugees from Europe, and with deputies like James Bryant Conant he effected a friendly cooperation with British scientists. Radar, sonar, the proximity fuse, the DUKW, the atomic bomb—these were a conspicuous few of the results of such teamwork.

If any further demonstration is needed of the greater resilience of a democracy in contest with dictatorship it will be found in the operation of the OSRD under Dr. Bush. He held the confidence of the scientists, he was granted an extraordinary latitude of trust by the President, and by the firm candor of his testimony he won the respect of senators as tough as McKellar. Why, he asks, was German science and technology "so deeply ineffectual" in the race for the atomic bomb? Two reasons: "First, Hitler's insanity had eliminated their Jewish scientists. The Jews have produced far more than their share of brilliant scientists, in Germany and here. Secondly, 'The Nazis had

no genuine collaboration between scientists and military men" (this, Bush cautions, is not true of the Soviet Union).

After an opening chapter in which Dr. Bush gives his reasons for believing in the American way of doing things and the philosophy he has evolved, he divides his text into seven pieces which can be read in continuity or in whatever order one pleases. I began with "Of Teachers and Teaching," which tells of his youth; moved on to "Of Leaders and Leadership," which speaks of his fealty to three Presidents, Hoover, FDR, and Truman, and with special insight of the relations between Secretary Stimson and General Marshall. In the chapter entitled "Of Stumbling Blocks," I was delighted by his head-on encounter with General Somervell, chief of the Service of Supply. Somervell was a traditionalist who was frank to tell Bush that "you and your crew are a damned nuisance," and he said forcibly that "the Army did not want the DUKW and would not use it if they got it." Bush prevailed, and the DUKW became a vital factor in landings in the Pacific, in Africa, in Sicily, and most notably on the Normandy beaches. So, too, Van was to prevail with the proximity fuse when he went to the Front to introduce it to some of our less imaginative artillery officers. A great administrator, an inventor of the Differential Analyzer, and of the Memex when its day comes, a tough incisive fighter, Dr. Bush is for all of us the shining example of an engineer who can write and be understood!

MRS. WALLOP
by Peter De Vries
Little, Brown, \$6.95

Mrs. Wallop, the heroine and workhorse of Mr. De Vries' new farce, is not a woman to be taken lightly. A widow of middle years with a nest egg of a quarter of a million bequeathed by her husband and watched over by her elderly boyfriend, Will Gerstenslager, she has been getting along quite happily making ends meet by running a boardinghouse and later by nursing those who are too ill to resist her in the small town of Appleton, Indiana. She needs no karate to defend herself against the malice and gossip of her neighbors—her lively mind and sharp tongue are more than sufficient. But literary as-

sassination is quite a different matter.

One of Mrs. Wallop's boarders was Randy Rivers, an aspiring writer, whom she cared for with what she regards as tenderness and who has repaid her by projecting her as a central character in his successful novel, *Don't Look Now, Medusa*. She visits the local bookstore to see if she can identify herself while browsing, and this is what she finds: "One of those dragons of respectability in which American small towns especially abound. . . . As for sex, her husband found a clamshell between those legs. . . . An ample bosom—of pure granite. . . . She wore her hair in a thick plait on top of her head, where it sat like a coiled adder, a fit trademark and apt metaphor for one ever poised to strike the unwary." Such was the portrayal of the landlady whom Randy had christened "Mrs. Lusk," and for whom she must have posed.

Mrs. Wallop is not one to be horrified, but she would enjoy a little revenge, and fate plays into her hands when the distinguished author is persuaded to come back to his hometown for a lecture. He braces himself too liberally for the ordeal and in mid-course takes a misstep, pitches off the platform, and in a befuddled state is brought back to his old room at Mrs. Wallop's to recuperate. In the situations that ensue Mrs. Wallop, who at times reminds me of James Joyce's Mrs. Bloom, holds all the aces.

But what she is ill prepared for is a second and more vindictive character-assassination by her son Osgood, an arty incompetent who has been struggling to write in New York. She reads this fantasy in the presence of Randy Rivers, and the thought occurs to them both—shall she take on and amplify the characteristics for which she has been defamed, and exploit them? In a far-out movie, perhaps? So the comedy moves into the third act, a preposterous, amusing parody that often cuts close to the bone.

YOU MIGHT AS WELL LIVE

by John Keats

Simon and Schuster, \$7.50

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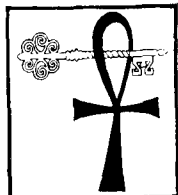
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be happy when getting tight in public, but she was a woman not for love, who had two husbands and four lovers, and who tasted the dregs of loneliness with each. John Keats has puffed hard to place her in her setting, and with the help of Donald Ogden Stewart, who knew Mrs. Parker well and longer than most, he does give occasional flashes of her denigrating wit and of her behavior, which could be unpredictably mean or laughable.

A native New Yorker, she was born Dorothy Rothschild, part Scot, part Jew, and totally unhappy at home: her mother died in her infancy, leaving her unwanted, and self-disparagement came early. At Miss Dana's School in Morristown, New Jersey, she is remembered as being "small, slender, dark-haired, and brilliant . . . she was peppy and she was never bored." But the money ran out when her father died, and she took refuge in a boardinghouse, supporting herself by playing the piano for a dancing school, and writing verses on the side.

In 1916 Frank Crowninshield paid her \$12 for a short verse and offered her a job on *Vogue*, then on *Vanity Fair*, where she found natural allies in Robert Benchley and Robert Sherwood, who gave her the backing she craved. I think she cared more deeply for Bob Benchley than she would ever acknowledge.

The three used to lunch occasionally at the Algonquin, and when they were joined by another triumvirate—Franklin P. Adams, who edited the city's liveliest column, "The Conning Tower," Harold Ross, and Alexander Woollcott—the Round Table, as it came to be called, had its nucleus.

The circle were clever rather than creative: they fed on each other and loved to show off, but they were not "the center of New York's intellectual life." Scribner's office, where Maxwell Perkins was encouraging the work of Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Tom Wolfe, had a far greater influence on American literature than the wisecracks at the Algonquin.

Mrs. Parker's verse was repetitious and without the depth of A. E. Housman's poems, with which Mr. Keats compares it; and her stories, sparse and some too brittle, do not really challenge comparison with Hemingway's. When all is said, she remains a stinging, elusive gadfly.

SHORT REVIEWS: BOOKS

by Phoebe Adams

MY REVOLUTION by Alex Karmel. McGraw-Hill, \$10.00. "Being," according to the subtitle, "the diary of Restif de la Breton," and indeed much of the text is lifted or paraphrased from the works of that sentimental pornographer. In spite of the borrowings, the book must be considered a novel—a strange novel, in which the author's purpose is not to devise his own world and people it with invented characters, but to recreate the actual world of Paris between 1789 and 1794 as it would have looked to a man who lived in it and who was, besides, a distinctly peculiar fellow. Restif's oddities, which make him a quirkily fascinating reporter, also allow Mr. Karmel to draw attention to resemblances between social conditions during the French Revolution and those of our own time. These resemblances are the real point of the book, which becomes, as haphazard reform develops into the Terror, quite frightening. It is also amusing on occasion. Who can help grinning over the realization that the twentieth-century short skirt has converted many a potential foot fetishist into an ordinary, harmless leg man?

THE INVISIBLE PYRAMID by Loren Eiseley. Scribner's, \$6.95. Mr. Eiseley's eloquent and elegant style is a bit like Milton's; it sometimes obscures sense with sound. Meaning is nonetheless there. Mr. Eiseley debates science and technology, and the gap between what man can accomplish with them and man's ability to comprehend what he is doing, or about to do, with these new tools. "Human beings are a strange variant in nature and a very recent one. Perhaps man has evolved as a creature whose centrifugal tendencies are intended to drive it as a blight is lifted and driven, outward across the night."

UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED by Shirley Chisholm. Houghton Mifflin, \$4.95. The first black woman to be elected to Congress is a gingery fighter with a blunt prose style and a habit of blurting out that which must make her warier colleagues shudder. She

confides that "the falseness or validity of an officeholder's statement is almost never discussed in Washington The question political people ask is seldom, 'Is he right?' but 'Why did he say that?' Or they ask, 'Where does he expect that to get him?' or 'Who put him up to that?' " What put Mrs. Chisholm up to it is intelligent, controlled rage.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIVES by Samuel Schoenbaum. Oxford, \$12.50. Professor Schoenbaum gets the solidly known facts about Shakespeare into 69 pages, and for another 700 entertains himself and the reader by describing the insubstantial pageants concocted out of this sparse material by legend-mongers, subjective biographers, Baconians, romanticists, Freudians, and plain liars.

SHAKESPEARE by Anthony Burgess. Knopf, \$15.00. Mr. Burgess, admired by Professor Schoenbaum as the only person who ever wrote a good novel about Shakespeare, claims "the right of every Shakespeare-lover . . . to paint his own portrait of the man." Admittedly speculative, thoroughly informal, the book is well illustrated, and the writing is animated by affection and an understanding of the creative imagination that only a creative writer can bring to bear.

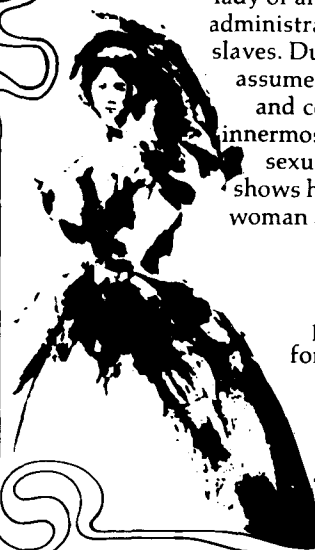
OWLS by John Sparks and Tony Soper. Taplinger, \$5.95. All that needs to be known about owls by anybody but an ornithologist or another owl, with drawings and photographs.

THE CONQUEST OF THE INCAS by John Hemming. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$12.50. The Inca made a long, stubborn defense against the Spanish conquest. Mr. Hemming has traveled old roads, visited old battlefields, and studied recently discovered documents. His history of the fall of Peru is no mere retelling of a generally known story, but an impressive work containing much new information.

MY GRANDFATHER, HIS WIVES AND LOVES by Diana Holman-Hunt. Norton, \$6.95. Holman-Hunt painted that marzipan Christ bearing a lantern and knocking wistfully at a locked, moldy, briar-clogged door. It is a pleasure to learn, from his granddaughter's irreverent explorations, that what really interested Holman-Hunt was the door, which he painted

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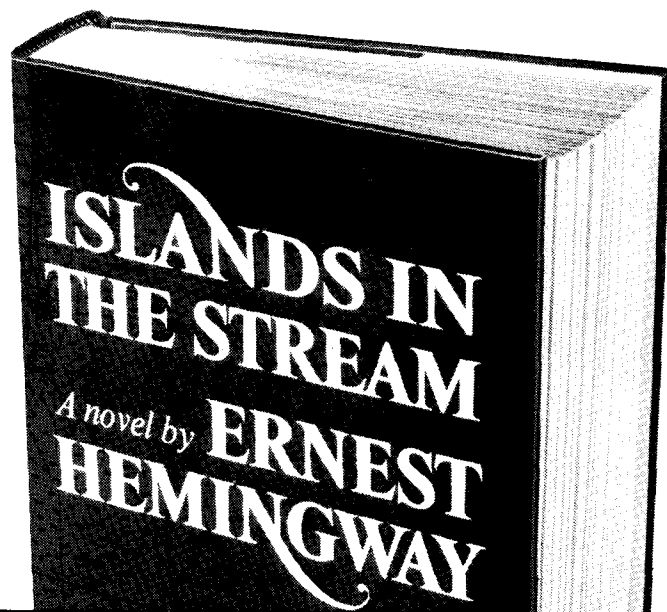
Far from being a delicate flower, the Southern lady of antebellum days was usually the hardworking administrator of a large family and a small army of slaves. During the war, and after, she was called on to assume more and more responsibility. Using diaries and correspondence, Anne Firor Scott reveals the innermost thoughts of these ladies on male attitudes, sexual mores, slavery, and "woman's place." She shows how, in the face of harsh realities, the idea of woman as the gentle and inferior sex was kept alive, and how, working within the limitations of this persistent myth, Southern ladies maneuvered their way into politics and the professions. A fascinating view of the battle for women's liberation fought in white gloves.

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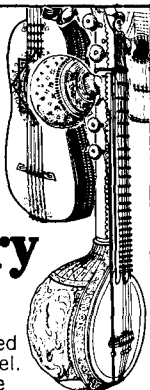
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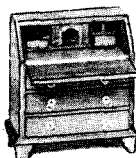
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in moonlight and discomfort, and needed a figure to dramatize. Christ was selected as a result of "the black-berry pudding row." If this sounds unusual, it is no more so than Pre-Raphaelite doings in general. The book is splendidly readable, full of aesthetic squabbles, disorderly models, raffish misadventures, scandal, family gossip, and complaints about Grandmother's habit of censoring letters with sashes of India ink.

THE ANTI-SOCIETY by Kellow Chesney. Gambit, \$8.95. Things were just as bad in Victorian London as they are in modern Chicago, it would seem, but Mr. Chesney's plodding prose makes it hard to care. The illustrations are wonderful, however—retrieved from a portfolio published by Gustave Doré in 1872.

THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews. University of California, 3 vols., \$27.00. A scholarly monument, thick with footnotes and explanations and, according to the editors, the first truly complete transcription of Pepys's private records.

BIRDS OF THE EASTERN FOREST, paintings by J. Fenwick Lansdowne, text by John A. Livingston. Houghton Mifflin, \$20.00. Wrens, warblers, bluebirds, and goldfinches glitter through these pages. The paintings are as handsome and the text as attractive as they have been in the previous books by this champion team.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES: THE UNHEARD VOICES OF VIETNAM edited and with a preface by Ly Quy Chung. Praeger, \$5.95; paper \$1.95. These short stories by South Vietnamese citizens, collected through a public writing contest, describe death, pain, loss, destruction, and bewilderment, but almost never mention politics. All are simple, unprofessional works, and most are transparently autobiographical. What they tell directly about the war is horrifying; what they imply about the fragmented, village-based society of South Vietnam suggests that capitalism and Communism are equally irrelevant there. The book includes a fine general introduction by Frances FitzGerald, but no information on exactly how the stories were chosen, or what sort of entries the judges discarded.

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